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GUIDE POSTS ON THE ROAD TO TRUTH.

BY THE LATE

REV. GEORGE BAMPFIELD, B.A. A

NEW EDITION.

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CONTENTS.

GUIDE POST

PAGE

* I.	Whatever was the road to truth when Christ was visibly present on earth, that is the road to Truth now, -	1
II.	The road to Truth must be easy to the poor, - - -	6
III.	As men knew Christ of old, when He taught on earth, so must we know Him still, - - - - -	10
IV.	Obedience to false prophets is not obedience, - - -	14
V.	Where all <u>signs</u> of God's presence meet together, there is the Truth, - - - - -	20
VI.	The <u>signs</u> of God's presence are not in the individuals of Christ's society, so much as <u>on the whole body</u> , - -	24
VII.	God is <u>(one)</u> : where God is, men are one, - - - -	27
VIII.	God is one: where men are one, there God is, - . -	33
IX.	Where God is, men may become more one, but cannot become less one, - . - - - - -	36
X.	If the Spirit be One, the body must be One also, - -	42
XI.	In God's body all members will be made one by every bond of oneness, - - - - -	46
XII.	The Truth of the Creator must be suited to <u>(all)</u> His Creatures, - - - - -	51
XIII.	Falsehood cannot be more loving than Truth, - - -	56
XIV.	God is <u>(Holy)</u> : where God is, there is Holiness, - - -	60
XV.	The indwelling of God is the source of Holiness, - -	66
XVI.	The body in which is holiness will know how to battle with sin, - - - - -	71
XVII.	Where the household is holy, there will be discipline, and the children will be holy, - - - - -	75
XVIII.	Good tree, good fruit: good fruit, good tree, - - -	81
XIX.	<u>(The true faith must be the old faith)</u> what is new cannot be true, - - - - -	87
XX.	At the Gate of the City, - - - - -	95

GUIDE POSTS ON THE ROAD TO TRUTH.

I.

“Whatever was the road to Truth when Christ was visibly on earth, that is the road to Truth now.”

IT is hard to travel on a weary search, and find what one has sought, and know that it is the treasure of treasures, but hold one's peace and say no word about the way to those that follow after. Therefore let me jot down some of the thoughts which led me into the Church. Men are led by ten thousand ways into the Church; for myself I sought a simple and an easy way, a way for the poor and the unlearned; a way for “little children;” for in travelling to heaven I feel myself safest, somehow, with the “little children.”

One of the simple thoughts which guided my enquiry into Truth throughout, and which, easy and almost childish as it may appear amidst the learned controversies of the day, I found of the utmost use when I was in maze and perplexity, was this: / “Whatever was the road to Truth when Jesus was visibly on earth, that is the road to Truth now. And whatever blessings men enjoyed in their searching for heaven then, those same blessings men enjoy now.” / I can scarce tell you how I reached that principle. It came to me. I think it was simply trust in my Saviour's

Heart. I was sure that He loves us now in these times as tenderly and truly as He loved the Jews amongst whom He lived for three-and-thirty years, and that therefore we have as simple and as clear a road to Truth as they, and helps as many and as strong.

And trust too in the power of His Precious Blood. I was sure that all the blessings which were on earth before the Crucifixion continued on earth, changed it may be in manner, but increased rather than diminished, after God was reconciled to men by that most awful Sacrifice. God's reconciliation to man could not be followed by a falling-off of blessing!

And trust too in the power of the Holy Spirit. He came down from heaven on Whit-Sunday, but He has not returned thither, neither does God wax old or feeble. The powers He had on the first Whit-Sunday He has still, and the Truth He then brought He still preserves.

Now clear it is that the Jews in our Saviour's time, the Apostles for instance, had besides the Scriptures the advantage beyond all price of an unerring "Teacher" of Truth "sent from God," an unerring interpreter of Holy Writ. The Jews seem to have had such a blessing even before our Lord's coming, in the many inspired Prophets sent to teach them.

Their ordinary teachers, even though wicked, seem to have been guided aright, for the Priests and the Scribes tell Herod truly "where Christ should be born," (St. Matt., ii. 4.) speak rightly about the coming of Elias; and even Caiphas "spake not of himself," but by reason of his office, "being High Priest, he prophesied" truly. (St. John xi., 49-52). At all events when our dearest Lord was on earth He taught and explained with His living voice infallibly.

Was there a difficulty about the coming of Elias? the disciples went to Him and He taught them. Did they not understand a Parable? they ran to Him, and He unfolded its hidden meaning. Was His death a mystery to them? "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." (St. John xxiv., 45.) And they knew that mistake was an impossibility: it was no opinion which He gave, which might be right or wrong, but *the* meaning, God's meaning, of God's Scriptures about which could be no further question.

All Christians seem to agree also that this blessing remained on earth while the Apostles lived. The Holy Ghost, (according to our Lord's promise), "taught them all things, and brought all things to their remembrance whatsoever He had said unto them." (St. John xiv., 26.) When there was doubt and difficulty among the early Christian converts they sent "up to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and elders" (Acts xv.) and no one among them thought himself at liberty, after their decision, to hold his own opinion on the matter. The word of the Apostles was accepted just as the word of our Blessed Lord had been accepted while He yet spake on earth. They had by gift from Him through the Holy Ghost the same freedom from error which He, being God, had of Himself.

When then our Lord ascended, or when His last Apostle died, did this blessing suddenly vanish from the earth? While they lived, men had the Scriptures and an interpreter who could not err, a "teacher sent from God." When they died, were men left to the Scriptures only, and the infallible teacher taken away? If so, the Christianity of these days is different from the Christianity of early times. We live under a different and less merciful Gospel.

The loving Heart of our Lord has in such case made the road to heaven more hard to me than to the Jew who lived while He or His Apostles yet lingered upon earth, and the devil has won a victory over our Lord by driving away one of the blessings gained by the Crucifixion, by binding the powers of God the Holy Ghost, unless indeed it is better to be without a guide than to have one, better to have (as men have in these days) "no small dissension and disputation," without the power to settle it, than to be able to send up to Apostles and Elders who shall infallibly declare that which "seems good to the Holy Ghost."

So then it seems to me that somewhere or other there remained on earth an interpreter, like St. Philip, to make me "understand what I read;" "a teacher sent from God" to help me, as Nicodemus was helped. A visible teacher he must be who could speak to me with a man's voice, face to face, for so our Lord taught, not only by His grace in the heart, but outwardly with His human lips and voice: so taught St. Philip or the Apostles. An infallible teacher, one who could not err, for so without the power of error taught our Lord and the Apostles. A "teacher sent from God" to teach error is an absurdity. God Himself would lead us wrong if He sent blind guides to lead the blind. Let it be granted that a teacher is really sent from God, and it follows that he *must* be preserved from all error by Him who sent, or he would be useless and worse than useless. An officer of God, he would be doing the work of God's enemy, mixing error with the Truth, sowing in God's name tares among the wheat. Those whom he taught would be either guided wrongly or left in as much doubt and anxiety as before.

Where, then, and by what method, was I to find this

teacher who was to be to me what St. Philip was to the Eunuch, what our Blessed Lord was to Nicodemus?

The first help put before me by that party in the Church of England with which I found myself connected, was a study of the writings left by the early Fathers, the few learned men among the early Christians who had written or whose writings were preserved. Especially I was sent to the writers of the first three or four hundred years after our Lord. And why to them? "Because," I was told, "in those early times Christianity was pure. (By degrees, as time crept on, it became mixed up a little with errors, so that the later Fathers are not so trustworthy as those who were nearer to the pure fountain-head.)"

The guide to truth put before me now was not "the Scriptures only," but "the Scriptures and the early Fathers." I rejected this guide. The Scriptures and the early Fathers are both *among* the helps to truth, but only among the helps: by themselves they are insufficient. And why?

* * * * *

1. I found that this guide left me just where I was before, that is to say, that in the long run it threw me back upon my private judgement, upon the powers of my own individual reason, and the depth of my own learning. "The Scriptures and the early Fathers" is only another, perchance a worse, form of private judgement. For I found that my interpreters themselves needed to be interpreted. If there is uncertainty and doubt about the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, equally is there uncertainty and doubt about the meaning of the early Fathers.

To the Fathers England appealed to overthrow Rome; to the same Fathers Rome appealed to overthrow England.

Was I equal, even if I had enjoyed the most gigantic intellect and the most undisturbed leisure, to the task of bringing England and Rome before the judgement seat of my own reason, and deciding as an individual their quarrel by my own private learning and wisdom. To myself it seemed that a task so bold was at war with the very idea of humility. No attitude could be more contrary to the attitude of "a little child," whereby we enter into "the kingdom of Heaven."

And, secondly, I had already set up as another Guide Post on the Road to Truth this principle—

II.

"The Road to Truth must be easy to the Poor."

It is not the rich, the leisured, and the wise that God more especially calls. One of the signs that our Lord claims for Himself is that "to the poor the Gospel is preached." One of my objections to private judgement of Scripture was that to the poor it was impossible. How much more strongly did this objection lie against "Scripture and the Fathers!" What poor man could buy the Fathers, what unlearned man could read them, what busy man could study them? Truth, which, when our Lord and His Apostles spake, was preached without possibility of error to thronging crowds of the unlearned poor on the hill-side or by the sea-shore, is now given only to the few rich who can pore at their leisure over costly books; and if they make a mistake in their reading, the unlearned crowds have no means of finding out the mistake, but must blindly follow their blind guides!

"Scripture and the Fathers" is a religion for a mere

handful among men. If it be true, "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a poor man to enter into the kingdom of God."

3. I thought that to appeal only to earlier Fathers, simply because they were nearer to the times of our Lord's life on earth, was to make the preservation of truth a merely natural affair. If our Lord merely preached truth and then left it alone, without supernatural interference, to take its chance, of course it would gradually become corrupt and the early Fathers would be the best witnesses. But if our Lord so left truth to change into error, if He so permitted His good wine to be gradually changed into water, it is hard to see of what *great* advantage to the world it is that it should have been preached at all; and the early Fathers, if the best, would still be but poor witnesses in so important an affair as truth, because it would be impossible to say when and with whom the corruption began. If, on the contrary, our Lord preserves truth by being "always with us, even to the end of the world," if He divinely keeps the truth which He divinely taught, then, I said to myself, the Fathers of later times would be as safe guides as the early writers, because their truthfulness would rest not on the mere natural fact of their being near in time to our Lord, but on His supernatural presence amongst us, which is the same at all times.

4. I may add that, besides all these general objections, the argument which Ritualists drew from the early Fathers seemed to me unsound and worthless. They argued, not from what the Fathers said, but from what they left unsaid. "Prayers for the dead," "Purgatory," "the devotion which Rome shows to our Blessed Lady," "the power of the

Pope" were untrue, not because the early Fathers said they were untrue, but because they said nothing about them. This seemed to me to prove nothing. For, firstly, the writers of these early times were very few, the books or rather little pamphlets which they wrote were few and short, and of those few books of few writers only fragments in many cases have been handed down to us. The Christians were scattered, too much persecuted, too little at leisure, for much writing: there were no schools or universities for men who lurked in catacombs or fled to the desert.

Moreover the few books that were written treated, as is the case in all times, of the questions of the day. Either they would be pamphlets showing the unreasonableness of persecuting the Christians and refuting absurd slanders, or short instructions for converts from idolatry, speaking of the mere groundwork of Christianity, neither of which would go into details of Christian doctrine and practice. Or again, they would be directed against some particular error of the day, and the errors with which the early Christians had to fight were about the first foundations of the faith, about the unity of God, the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, the reality of Christ's manhood and sufferings. About these errors then the writings would be, but about matters upon which all agreed they would be silent. Silence is often a sign of universal agreement. Men do not wrangle about matters of course. Suppose we took, I often said to myself, the religious pamphlets, (I do not speak of regular courses of theology; none such were certainly written in the earlier centuries) printed in the last ten years. How many of them would be upon the equality of the Three Persons in the Blessed Trinity? Scarcely

one. Would therefore this silence prove that no one believed in this equality? No. It would prove that everybody believed in it, that it was no question of the time. So, therefore, granting the silence of the early Fathers about certain doctrines, it might come either from their writings being so few, or being lost, or from the fact that everybody believed those doctrines. (There was no question about them. Everybody prayed for the dead, was devout to our Lady, and obeyed the Pope; why therefore teach what everybody knew.)

The real question, it seemed to me, was, not whether the earliest Fathers mentioned Purgatory and the like, but the question was this: when we do find these doctrines mentioned, are they spoken of as matters of course which everybody already knew, just hinted at in passing as things already accepted; or are they introduced as something new and strange, with a flourish of trumpets and much argument from Scripture, and loud condemnation of everybody who had gone before the writer, as Luther and Calvin introduced their doctrines? And when they are first spoken of, do they cause a great disturbance among Christians? Are there sects and parties formed about them, and do religious wars and tumults take place?

Now on all these doctrines which the High Church Party (or rather some among them, for many were the shades of belief among them) rejected as not in the Fathers I found these two signs:

1. When first spoken of, they are spoken of as things known and accepted, about which was no question.
2. Their introduction (supposing it an introduction) produced no disturbance, no tumult, no discussion among Christians.

Yet surely the early Christians were most loyal to their old faith, most jealous of novelties. Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Pelagius, each causes terrible struggles. At once the faithful are in arms. The preaching of novelties is the shedding of blood. Yet *all* the (so-called) novelties of Rome, with *no exception whatever*, are introduced among these jealous keen-eyed watchful Christians without the shadow of disturbance! Christians shake off at the price of their blood all other errors, but the errors of Rome the same Christians accept at once without a murmur. Surely this is strange.

For these and other reasons I rejected as insufficient the guidance of "the Scriptures and the early Fathers." What I asked for was a living teacher, as Nicodemus had; what Ritualism gave me was a quantity of books to be read by my private judgement. Still nothing but my own private opinion after all! The Jews while our Lord lived had truth from His living human lips; truth infallible, incapable of error; I was sure that my dear Lord's Sacred Heart had somewhere or other as much for me as for the Jew.

III.

"As men knew Christ of old, when He taught on earth, so must we know Him still."

ALWAYS, when I was in trouble, I fell back upon my old thought; the ways of God are now what they always were; if they seem to change, it is because He ever shows more mercy, not less; more truth, not less; more bounty, not less. There is no evening of God's love: there was once a morning of His love, but the dawn has brightened ever on to perfect day, and the sun of God's mercy hasteth not

to go down. For ourselves we are living surely in the midday, not in the dawn. So then I asked myself—"Had I lived during the grand three-and-thirty years, how should I have known Christ to be the Christ? Some knew Him not then, and some knew Him. In what way and by what signs did those some know Him?" "But," men answered me, "you do not live in the grand three-and-thirty years." Nay—what the Gospel was, the Gospel is; (the three-and-thirty years go on for ever;) the same graces, the same difficulties, the same system of God's mercy; and as the Jews found Him then in Jerusalem, so shall I find Him now in England.

How then did the Jews find Him? How did the poor among the Jews, the unlearned multitude, the rabble that flocked after Him to desert and to seashore, by what easy plan did they know the secrets of heaven and feel so sure that the Great Teacher was the promised Christ? For by such easy plan can our rabble of London know Him now.

1. Not clearly by any deep study of holy Scripture.

It was made an argument against Him that His only followers were the multitude "that knew not the law." Few of the scribes who wrote the law, and the lawyers who studied the law, and the Pharisees who boasted to live the law, few of those found Him. The babes and the sucklings who neither wrote nor studied, nor so much as read, they found Him. The Scriptures were a store-house out of which men drew objections to Him. Does He not come out of Galilee, and do the Scriptures speak anywhere of a Prophet from Galilee? Are not the Scriptures severe about the Sabbath, and does He not do all manner of unscriptural things upon the Sabbath day. Do not the Scriptures say that the true Christ shall be a conqueror

and shall rule? What sign is there of His conquests? Where are His armies? Did He not pay tribute the other day to Rome?

2. How then did the poor unlettered Jew find Him?

Not certainly by simple submission to his superiors in the Jewish Church.

Why! that was the whole question. If he had simply to follow his superiors, his superiors would have led him away from Christ. He had to choose between them. Christ claimed to be from God, and the Pharisees said He was not; the Pharisees claimed to be from God, and Christ claimed a power superior to theirs and a right to rebuke their lives, and teach doctrines grander and more perfect than theirs. If the Jew owed obedience to the Pharisee, the Pharisee owed obedience to Christ, and when he did not give it, he lost his right to command the Jew. The whole question was then, who showed the best claim to be from God, Christ or the Pharisee? The poor Jew was in great straits: no doubt it was right to obey the Pharisee; Christ Himself said so; they sat in Moses' seat, and taught true doctrine. Up to a certain point they led him right; but on the matter of fact, "was Jesus the Christ or not?" they led him wrong. They excommunicated him, they "cast him out of the Synagogue" if he believed in Christ; they bade him believe rather that Christ was a sinner and despiser of Moses, a breaker of the law, a blasphemer, a fellow worker with the devil in false miracles, a man of evil life, being a glutton and a wine-bibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners. He could not then simply follow his Church superiors and be at rest. He had to decide: Is Jesus from God in declaring Himself Christ, or are the Pharisees from God in denying Christ? How am I to

tell? See now, doubt and difficulty about religion are no new things, no things of to-day, I fancy they began with the Fall and will last to the Judgement—much the same at all times—your trial and mine, and the trial of most men in all ages.

3. How then was the poor unlettered Jew to know Jesus to be the Christ, if neither by Scripture nor by the teachers of his Church?

Not only nor chiefly by judging of His doctrines.

Those who judged of Him, doctrine by doctrine, held back like Nicodemus, who knew not how a man could be born again, or turned away like the disciples who understood not how He could give them His flesh to eat, or condemned Him of blasphemy and took up stones to stone Him, or rent their garments and passed judgement on Him, because He made Himself the Son of God. The doctrines being from heaven were above them, and when they sat as judges on them, they fell as they deserved to fall for thinking to judge the secrets of heaven.

4. How then did the poor unlettered Jew find Christ? How came he to be so certain that he was the Christ?

It seemed to me that the answer was in the story of that poor blind man in the ninth chapter of St. John's Gospel. Blind from his birth, he certainly was no student of Scripture; his teachers were dead against him, wise proofs had they that the man who had opened his eyes was no better than a sinner; of our Lord's doctrines he seems to have known nothing; for all that he was right and the Pharisees were wrong. By what easy plan did he so find the truth of God? His easy plan was to judge by outward signs and marks. "Whether he be a sinner or not," says he, "I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was

blind, now I see!" A strong argument, my masters! Sinners do not mostly open people's eyes; do you the like, and I shall know you to be from God, but meanwhile "it is a marvellous thing that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes." The unlettered blind man reasoned aright, and the learned Pharisee reasoned wrongly. The poor blind man made his choice between the Pharisee and Christ; on the one he saw the outward mark of God's presence, on the other much talk of Scripture, much pretence of authority, but no outward marks of God's presence. Mark what follows! He chose his teacher, and then believed his teacher's teaching. "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" "Who is he, Lord," says he, simply, "that I may believe on Him?" "I that speak unto thee," answers our Lord, "am He!" and instantly from the ignorant poor beggar came a confession of faith as grand almost as that of Peter, "Lord, I believe," and an act which showed the truth of his faith, "he fell down and worshipped Him."

So then his way of finding Christ was to judge of Him by outward signs, and having so judged Him to be the Christ, to be the Teacher sent from God, to listen to all His words as the teaching of heaven, and to believe them because they were from heaven. Is this the way in which we are still to find our Lord and His truth?

IV.

"Obedience to false prophets is not obedience."

I TOOK much comfort from the blind man in St. John's Gospel. There was one snare about my feet which was a great trouble to me; and the blind man's history opened

my eyes to see it and to cut it away ; though it was almost the last thing which I did wholly cut away, and I bring it in here quite out of the order of time. I want to put it clearly, because I am sure that many minds still feel as I felt, and that it is a snare which is very commonly laid, and which clings about the feet of many. I knew well that humility was the road to truth : that all would be right if one could become as a little child, and that God tells His secrets to “ babes and sucklings ” rather than to the “ wise and prudent.” I took it, as I still take it, that part of humility is to think little of one’s self, and among other things, little of one’s intellect, and of the value of one’s private opinion ; and to be, therefore, willing to follow the teachings of those who have authority to teach. Conceit is clearly the spouse of falsehood : they two are one. I was frightened, therefore, and I was quite right to be frightened, at any idea that I was trusting to my private judgement, and that I was not submitting to right and lawful teachers. Others tried to take hold of this right thought and direct it wrongly. “ See ! ” men said to me, “ here are your authorized teachers sent by God ; the Prayer Book of the Church of England ; the Bishops of the Church of England ; and, to come more home, the Rev. Mr. Jones, your parish clergyman, and the Rev. Mr. Brown, to whom you go to confession (for I went to confession as regularly as any Catholic in those days), they are the teachers whom God has sent and whom you must obey. Now, they tell you distinctly not to enquire but to trust to them ; they say, that you need not trouble yourself ; that they take it all upon themselves. If you do not listen, where is your likeness to a little child ? Where is your giving up of private judgement ? Those who have always been Catholics

will scarcely understand me. It is, I fancy, nearly impossible for them to imagine the sort of web in which Protestants are entangled ; a cobweb, I grant, but we were mere flies in our weakness, and a fly in a cobweb, especially with a spider sucking at him, is in a very uncomfortable position, and his chances of getting out are not great. I was puzzled, therefore, and frightened by that which men said. I dwell upon the matter because many are so frightened and puzzled. "Work, don't think ;" "trust in me, and all is right ;" "promise me to read nothing, and think nothing about it for a year ;" such things are frequently said to the poor struggling flies when they try to get out ; "Be still, poor fly, you are not in a cobweb at all, and I am not a spider."

I was comforted at last by my poor blind man, and I came to see that such talk was, to use an ugly word, genuine priest-craft—Pharisee-craft. What do I mean by priest-craft? I mean this. When a true messenger really sent from God, the real priest of the real Church, gives proofs of the reality of his Church to those that ask him, and claims obedience to his message because of these proofs, that is not priest-craft ; when a man claims to be sent from God, and to belong to the true Church, but refuses to give proofs of the truth of his Church, or to allow those proofs to be examined, and claims the while obedience to himself, simply on his own word, and because he says he is right, that is priest-craft. "Obey, because God has sent me, but ask no proofs of His sending," is unreasonable.

So was it with the poor blind man. The Pharisees claimed his obedience ; taught him indeed that a true Christ was to come, and that when He came, He was to be

obeyed ; but bid him not enquire whether this was the true Christ or not. "But, here," said the blind man, "are reasonable grounds for doubting ; He opened my eyes." "You are a sinner, and he is a sinner," was the answer ; "follow us or we will cast you out ; don't enquire." Had he not enquired he would not have found the Christ.

I came then to see that obedience to false prophets is not obedience. Obedience is to God and to God's messengers ; but the whole question is, "Are they God's messengers or not?" and it was just into this that my teachers would not let me enquire. Certainly I will obey you if you be from God, but I have a right to know whether you be from God or not. The first part of obedience is to see that we obey the proper person. Obedience to Baal is not quite the same thing as obedience to God. When, therefore, you tell me, "Work, don't think ; trust in me;" you are shirking the whole difficulty ; the question is, "Who are you? What right have you to claim to be trusted?" I am not doubting you without reasonable grounds. Rome, you say, is a Christian Church, with real bishops and real priests ; and Rome tells me that the Church of England is a sham Church, with sham bishops and sham priests. These clear words of Rome give me the right to doubt and to question you ; and when I question, you say, "Work, don't think." Rome somehow is not afraid of my thinking, and England is. There are numbers of laymen and laywomen in the Church of England at this moment, simply because their clergy have frightened them out of enquiring ; as though it was against the duty of a "little child" to make search after its true mother, and choose, if it could, between two claimants.

Both before and after I became a Catholic I have been

frequently taunted in this way : " You talk about private judgement, condemn Protestants for judging privately ; yet what more tremendous use of private judgement than to enter the Church of Rome, altogether condemning and denying the Church of which you were a child—a society so important, so large, and so good. Truly you had better hold your peace about private judgement." Well ! what sort of judgement did the blind man use ? It is clear that men must use some sort of judgement about religion, or else it would be a matter of chance. If you belonged to a Jewish household, a Jew you must remain ; if you belonged to a pagan household, a pagan you must remain, unless some sort of judgement was lawful and good. The blind man's judgement was good ; the Pharisee's judgement was bad ; what was the difference between them ?

The difference seemed to be this : the Pharisee judged of doctrines, saying, " the doctrines please me not, therefore the teacher is not of God ;" the blind man judged of the signs which God had put upon his teacher, and then said, " this man is of God, therefore his doctrines are true." The first kind of judgement seemed to me absurd, for if God sends a message to man, it is ludicrous for man to criticize it ; the second kind of judgement seemed to me *necessary*, for we must know a teacher to be from God before it can be right to listen to him, and we cannot know him to be from God unless God put marks upon him. Otherwise we might be hearkening to a devil as if he were an angel, obeying a prophet of falsehood as if he were a prophet of truth.

Judging of the signs on your teacher is a *necessity* ; and is, moreover, encouraged and recommended by our Blessed Lord. He is always appealing to His works, to the out-

ward signs which He showed. "Had I not done among them," says He, "the works which no other man did, they would have had no sin." "The works," says He, again, "which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." "Though ye believe not Me, believe the works." Again when a voice came to Him from heaven He tells the people—"This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes." And once more—when He works His last grand sign of raising Lazarus from the dead, He says (S. John xi. 41-42), "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I know that Thou hearest Me always, but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me."

Here, then, was a private judgement that was needful, that was my duty, which God commanded and to which He encourages me. It was widely different from the private judgement of Nicodemus, "Can a man be born again when he is old?" or the private judgement of the disciples who went back, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" In the one case you say, "I need not a teacher," or you set yourself up above your teacher, saying, "God's teacher teaches not well. I also can teach as well as he." This is *not* like "a little child." In the other case you feel yourself a little child, and because you so feel yourself you ask for a teacher, and ask to be made sure that he is from God, because you feel your childishness and know how easily you can be led wrong; and when you have found he is from God, then you give yourself to him to be taught wholly, trustingly, without doubt, without criticism, with all the simplicity and the trust of a "little child." So by the plainness of outward signs can the poor

and the simple find the truth ; no deep thought is needed, no long enquiry, no costly libraries, no difficult learning ; the easily seen signs, the outward marks of God's presence, are on God's teachers, and the marks of God's absence are on the false prophets who have stolen the sheep's clothing.

As the blind man judged between Christ and the Pharisees by outward signs and chose truly, so would I judge between England and Rome by outward signs, not doubting to find truly.

V.

" Where ALL signs of God's presence meet together, there is the Truth."

WHENEVER a messenger has come from God since the world began, he has had God's marks upon him as signs that he was sent. All possible signs met together upon our Blessed Lord, and by these men knew Him. All possible signs met together on the Apostles, and by these men knew or ought to have known them. As men knew Christ and the Apostles, so, I said to myself, men know Christ's messengers now; all possible signs will meet together on the body of men which bears God's message to His world.

I noticed that where was the Truth there not one only but *all* the signs of God's presence would be found, and all of them too in fullest perfection. Some of the signs might be copied more or less; all could not be. The magicians of Egypt worked, or seemed to work, two of the miracles which Moses worked: but then they stopped; on themselves by-and-by fell the boils and blains. The Pharisees were holy after a fashion, and no doubt pointed to their holiness as a proof that when they rejected Christ they

were right; how could such pious good people make such a blunder? Simon Magus did some wonderful things that looked like God's power; but when his devil's miracles came face to face with the miracles of God, men saw which was the truth and which the copy. In the signs of all these men there were two faults—the signs they showed were but one or two signs, not all; and those one or two signs were not perfect and did not go far enough. The magicians had the miracles, but not the holiness; the Pharisees the holiness but not the miracles: then the miracles of the magicians broke down; men might possibly doubt between Moses and the magicians during the changing of the waters and the swarming of the frogs, but the boils and blains settled the question. And the holiness of the Pharisees broke down; men might think the Pharisees righteous till they met a holiness which exceeded the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and found the one holiness approved by miracle and the other not, found the one holiness end in envious murder, the other in the patience of the Cross.

The proof of Christ's message was not one sign, but the meeting of all possible signs in their fullest perfection upon Him alone. The signs were all possible signs, and each sign was perfect of its kind. (St. John Baptist was not the Christ; for he had the true holiness indeed, but he did no miracle.) It is true that different men were drawn to belief by different signs; one, like St. John's blind man, from miracles, another from the wondrous preaching, "Never man spoke like this man;" another like St. Andrew from the words of St. John Baptist; a fourth like Nicodemus by the depth of His wisdom, and another like Mary Magdalen by His pitying tenderness with sinners. But had they

found other signs absent they would have believed no more. If the blind man whose eyes were opened had found that the Pharisees spoke truly, and that our Lord really was a glutton and a wine-bibber, a breaker of the Sabbath and a despiser of the law; if, that is to say, he had found on our Lord the sign of miracle but not the sign of holiness, he would then have rightly drawn back his faith. If Nathaniel, who was drawn by our Lord's spirit of prophecy in seeing him under the fig tree, had found that no explanation was to be given about His coming out of Nazareth instead of Bethlehem, then he would have had reasonable grounds for doubting, for on our Lord would have been the sign of prophecy, but not the sign of agreement with Scripture.

It was the meeting of all the signs, of holiness of life and holiness of teaching, of wondrous miracle and perfect fulfilment of Scripture, of voices from heaven and the testimony of the Baptist, meeting together in perfection, on One who claimed to be the Christ and pointed to those signs as the proof—it was this which proved Him to be the Christ, and made men without excuse in rejecting Him. If they did not see the signs it was because they did not look into them; for envy or sloth, or pride or love of gain, blinded the eyes that would not see.

I said to myself, then, I have a right so to ask for the meeting of all the signs upon the Church which is the true Church. If God be present, all signs of His presence will go with it, and that too in perfection; if God be absent, I may find some likeness of some one or two signs, remnants of truth, faint gleams of holiness, agreement on some points with Scripture, but not the meeting of all signs. It is impossible that God should put all marks of His presence

upon the wrong Church, all marks of His absence on the right Church. If so indeed it could be, what blame to His creatures if they erred?

I began then to compare the Church of Rome with the Church of England and other Protestant bodies as to the signs which lay upon them.

If it were done at all, of course it must be done fairly.

It would not do to read the lives of good Protestants, but not the lives of Catholic Saints; it would not do to read accounts of Protestant Missionary Societies, but not to read the Catholic Annals of the Propagation of the Faith. Henry Martyn must be put side by side (may the saints forgive me!) with St. Francis Xavier, Luther compared with St. Ignatius, St. Vincent of Paul with Howard the Philanthropist, or St. Jane Frances de Chantal with Lady Huntingdon and Mrs. Fry. Catholic explanation of Scripture and Protestant explanation of the same Scripture must be looked at together; and the prayers of Ken or Andrew compared with Catholic devotional works. Catholic accounts of Catholic doctrines must be taken from their own books; the full Catholic doctrine thoroughly examined; the most startling things that St. Alfonso wrote of Mary weighed quietly. Catholic cities must be compared, so far as possible, with Protestant cities, to see if the one or the other religion produced outwardly the greater morality—in every way, fairly and fully, the religions were to be searched for the signs of God's presence or God's absence upon either.

VI.

“The signs of God’s presence are not on the individuals of Christ’s society so much as on the whole body.”

LOOKING further and more deeply, I began to see that the signs, which it would be reasonable to look for in our Lord’s society, would be the same—and yet not the same—as the signs on our Lord Himself.

1. Our Lord was one man: His society is a body of men.

On a society there must be marks which could not be found upon one man. That one man should speak ever the same truth, that he should never be inconsistent with himself, never waver, never contradict himself, never change his opinion, that through all the questions of enemies trying to catch him in his discourse, he should still steer his way without the shadow of a change of view, that he should be able to clear away all seeming difficulties, and show how all his teachings were one—this we should look upon as a sign of wisdom wondrously above the common wisdom of men. And if a teacher—claiming to be sent from God—be not only true to himself, but if his teaching be without shadow of difference, perfectly one, with the teaching of all who have claimed to be from the same God before him—if he enlarge, explain, fulfil their teaching, give the key to their teaching, but is always one with them—this also we should say would be wondrously beyond the common wisdom of men.

Such sign was upon our Lord. But He has promised that they who believed on Him should do greater things than He. And greater of necessity must be the sign of oneness in His society. If it be unusual that one man

should always, without a finger's-breadth of change, agree with himself, it would be more unusual—so unusual as to be surely Divine—if millions of men agreed wholly, even for a generation, each with the other. Surely Divine—for by nature men's minds fall each away from the other, and each, seeing but parts of truth, starts away from his neighbour who sees other parts, and makes even the truth he holds untrue, because he parts it from the whole. But if it be strange that millions should agree even for a generation, it is still more strange if for generations after generations, through many a hundred years, still such agreement goes on—if one generation enlarges, explains, fulfils, but is still perfectly one with the generations that are past; if for centuries not one man, but a body of men, steer its way safely through ten thousand difficult and entangling doctrines, through a myriad attempts to catch it in its discourse. Still more strange if, not for a few hundred years, but for many, such a body of men—so holding one truth—are fast bound together under one government, obeying perfectly where no force compels obedience. For obedience is not natural, and governments do not last. If there be one government which changes not, and which, alone powerless to enforce its order, alone is obeyed—such obedience and such government is surely not of earth.

So again with Catholicity. Our Lord preached to the Jews. His followers were to do greater things than He, and, therefore, go they out to all nations. If God made all, the knowledge of God will suit all. If among all the religions of earth one has so made itself dear to all, that in all men are ready to die for it, and in all it must be either kept out by brute force or driven out by brute force, such religion is from the Creator of all.

2. There is another difference. If on the one hand the signs of our Lord's society would be greater than the signs on our Lord Himself, in another way they would be less. Our Lord is God, Who can neither err nor sin; our Lord's society is a body of men, (each of whom can both err and sin;) and God has left each man to err and sin if he pleases. He has not taken away the power to err or sin. In what way then will this power to err and sin injure the signs of oneness or of holiness? Are we to expect all the members of the society to understand and hold the truth thoroughly and perfectly? Are all the members to be thoroughly and perfectly holy? Is there never to be any quarrel, never any scandal, never any sin?

And I came to see that the answer to this was, that the individuals of the body may both err and sin; if not, they would not still be on their trial; they would not still be subject to temptation. But that Christ's society—as a body—as a society—could neither err nor sin; if it could err or sin then there would be no mark upon it. Individuals might, if they so pleased, fall into error, holding false doctrines, either from ignorance or from pride; so might they for a time make quarrel and dissension within the body; but the body could never, as a body, permit two different doctrines to be taught within it, and they who taught the new doctrine must either give it up or leave the body. They have their freedom to err, but the society will put away their error and so keep its unity.

Or individuals may sin; whole cities may be sinful; but the body, as a body, will never teach their sin nor permit it. Individuals might fall far short of the holiness which

was the sign of Christ—but the body, as a body, would keep the holiness of Christ, teaching all things that led to holiness, giving all the helps that led to holiness, and in the case of those who thoroughly followed the teaching and rightly used the helps, making saints who in holiness and in miracles are true copies of the Christ. But men must be free to reject the teaching and to neglect or abuse the helps, so that the body cannot make them holy as it would.

So then I saw that while in Christ's society the marks would be in some sense more wonderful than the marks upon Himself, yet these marks might be darkened and made less bright by the human weakness and sins which could not be on Christ, and that what I must look to must be, not this or that individual member of the body, but the whole body itself.

VII.

"God is One: where God is men are one."

I HAD settled—

- I. That the way to find God's truth is to listen to God's teachers.
- II. That there are many teachers of religion, all professing to be from God.
- III. That they cannot all be right.
- IV. That God enables men to tell the true Prophets from the false Prophets—the true Christs from the false Christs.
- V. That He does this by putting on them outward signs; on the true Prophets signs of His presence, on the false Prophets signs of His absence.

VI. That these signs want looking for, yet they are so plain that the poor and unlearned can see them.

Such a sign was oneness. Men are creatures of one Creator, children of one Adam, sharers of one nature, all brothers and sisters and members of one family; God must want them to be united, to be one. He cannot love to see them split up, separated, at war. Knowing one truth, joining in one worship, obeying one head, being of one nation, these things make men one. Different beliefs, different ways of worship, different governments, different nations, these things separate men, split up the family. Whatever makes men one is of God, whatever makes men less one is not of God. What religion in the world makes men one—or tends to make men one—would make men one if men would let it?

I wanted to look at it simply, as a poor man with simple mind might look at it, for the truth I was sure could be found by the poor. As a poor man, therefore, I would look about first at my own town and my own nation, and I said, "Three hundred years ago England chose its own Religion; if it is God's truth, it will in three hundred years have united Englishmen together; if it is not God's truth it will in three hundred years have parted Englishmen asunder. Which has it done?" I found first that in the British Isles were four peoples, English, Scotch, Welsh, Irish; and I found that speaking roughly we have four religions, one for each:

1. For England, Church of England,
2. For Scotland, Presbyterianism,
3. For Wales, Dissent,
4. For Ireland, Catholicity.

This was not my notion of oneness, it looked more like the Tower of Babel than the day of Pentecost.

England's religion has clearly not made its people one. This does not seem to be for want of a chance. Persecution may stop truth from getting on: but England's religion has been petted by the State not persecuted; seats in the House of Lords are not persecution. Poverty may stop truth from getting on, but England's ministers have not been poor; fair incomes and plenty of ready-made churches and parsonages. War and trouble may stop truth from getting on; but England has on the whole had three hundred years of such peace as perhaps no other nation has ever seen; no invader from without, little trouble from within.

A fair chance then, a splendid chance; yet at the end of three hundred years, Ireland firm in her old faith, and Scotland and Wales parted away from England.

But this was not quite all. I said that, speaking roughly, we had four religions for the four different peoples in the British Isles, and that the Church of England was the religion of England. It was speaking very roughly. I went about my little town, and I found that it would be scarcely too strong to say that each street had its own religion. The old parish church round which the old houses had grouped themselves in old Catholic times like sheep about their shepherd; and there in Fore Street the Baptist chapel, and in Back Street the Independent chapel, and in Middle Street the Wesleyan chapel, and down by the river side the Primitive Methodist, and over the water the Quaker, and, just building, the new Irvingite church, and here and there sprinkled little mission-rooms for independent apostles preaching I know not what. And it

was my lot to go into the vestry-room of the old parish church when there were vestry meetings, and I saw what England's religion had done to make men one. I met fifty men gathered together with hot feelings and angry words, all calling themselves Christians, each holding a different Christianity. And I said to myself, "This is the modern day of Pentecost! This is the work of the Holy Ghost!" Three hundred years ago men meeting in this same grand old church, not with loud talk and uncovered head, but with hushed voice and bare head and reverent step, held all the one faith, worshipped the one worship, and obeyed the one minister; three hundred years of England's religion have split this one family into these fifty wrangling enemies; is this God's work?

But this was not quite all. A mile away beside the old ford by which men passed the stream before the age of bridges, was the dearest old church in England, a sort of infant church, a child-like thing of simple days, built in the cradle-time of England's Christianity. Small and strong and low, built to stand for ever as by men who knew their religion to live with the Life of God. And to both churches I went, and in the larger church the minister of the Church of England preached to me that without baptism I could not be saved, and in the old church by the river-side the minister of the same church told me that baptism had nothing to do with salvation, and that to preach new birth by baptism was a snare of Satan; the one condemned me for the same thing by which the other saved me; in the larger church the minister told me that our Lord's Body was on the altar, in the old church by the ferry not so, that there was no altar and no Body of our Lord; both ministers used the same Prayer-book, both

read the same Scriptures ; both were sent by the same bishop. And I said again, "Is this the day of Pentecost? Is this the work of God?"

But this was not quite all. For living on I found that the same minister changed the Gospel that he preached, and that what this year was true next year became false, that he had new lights, that he accepted the doctrine of assurance one year, and found the doctrine of the millenium another year, and that still he was approved by the same bishop. And I said, in the same British Empire part differs from part ; in the same part sect differs from sect ; in the same sect minister differs from minister ; in the same minister year differs from year. This is not unity.

And I said does this division come of accident, or is it the nature of the religion? And I found that they all agreed in one thing, and in one only. Each one said that his religion was the religion of the Bible. Must all be baptized? Yes: the Scriptures were clear upon it. Was baptism of no consequence, quite a matter of choice? Nothing clearer from the Scriptures. Were good works necessary? Oh! surely; look at the Gospels. Were good works necessary? Most decidedly not: look at the Epistles. So the same Scriptures blew hot and cold, taught black and white, yes and no. And I said, You judge the Scriptures each for yourselves, and whatever you think them to mean, that you believe? And they answered me, for the most part, "Yes; this is the right we won three hundred years ago when we parted from the Pope; the right to read and judge for ourselves; the Bible is chained no more." "That is the very root of the Protestant Religion?" And they answered, "Yes." And

out of that root there have sprung fruits—sects splitting into other sects, multiplying daily—till there is a different religion for every house, and in that house a different religion for each man ; save where another fruit has come forth more deadly still, the fruit of indifference and infidelity. By their fruit shall ye know them—England's religion has not made men one. On that at all events—neither on it nor on any part of it—is the sign of God's oneness.

I had only looked at England itself ; I had only asked whether England's religion had made oneness amongst Englishmen themselves. If it had not made themselves one, certainly it had not made them one with other nations. I passed the English Channel, and found myself a stranger being amidst my fellow men. It was not language that parted me ; it was not the narrow sea, nor the difference of nation. A gulf deeper and broader than the English Channel was fixed between me and every nation of Europe ; it was difference of religion, and the difference of habit and thought and daily life that springs of difference of religion. I knew, indeed, that there were German Protestants and Swiss Protestants, but where was their oneness with England ; wherein did it consist, and how did it show itself ? And I found that England's religion kept England alone and aloof—that she had a sullen life by herself which drew not the love of the nations. And I found that she herself cherished this loneliness—that she looked down upon others, boasting herself in her religion and her greatness as a nation put apart to reign over the rest. And I said : “ England's religion has parted her from all others, and has split up her children into a thousand sects. There is nothing of God's oneness

here. God is one, and where God is, men are one ; but here men are not one ; therefore is God not here, and this religion is not of God."

VIII.

"God is One : where men are one, there God is."

I CERTAINLY had not found oneness among Protestants.

(Was it to be found among Catholics?)

Could there be such a thing as two Catholic priests in the same town, both sent by the same bishop, both preaching opposite doctrines, each declaring the other to be destroying souls, the bishop looking on and stopping neither? I could not find two such priests.

Was there any doubt among Catholics as to the way of being saved? Did, for instance, some hold with Baptism, some call it useless or worse?—some believe in Confession, others reject it? some support the Mass, others deny it? I found that it was not so ; all held with Confession ; laymen went to Confession, priests went to Confession, bishops went to Confession, the Pope went to Confession ; those that did not go all agreed that they should go ; all Catholics,—Pope, bishops, priests, laymen—held alike that "No Baptism, no heaven : " all Catholics alike believed in Mass ; all believed in devotion to our Blessed Lady ; all in Purgatory ; there were no High Catholics, Low Catholics, Broad Catholics ; no reformed Catholics, nor primitive Catholics ; no Independent Catholics, no "New Connections." Their customs, their prayers, their feast-days and fast-days were all the same ; all went without meat on Friday ; all carried their "beads"—their Rosary,—all used holy water, all held to images and crucifixes. They who

did not practise the belief, all held the belief; they might not do as the others did, but they believed as the others believed; and if they did not live the Catholic life, they all hoped to die the Catholic death. Difference of belief produced no quarrels among Catholic families; if for other things they quarrelled, yet not for that; that helped to keep them one; no Catholic husband wrangled with his Catholic wife, because she was an Episcopalian Catholic and he a Presbyterian Catholic, she a Purgatorial Catholic and he an anti-Purgatorial Catholic. Difference of belief did not produce quarrels in parishes; lay Catholics might dislike their priest because he was cross or idle, or what not—who can like everybody?—but I never heard of Catholics refusing to “sit under” such and such a priest, because he taught something they did not believe. Men might be Catholics or not Catholics, but there were not different sorts of Catholics; all held the same one faith, used the same one worship, obeyed the same Head.

It certainly did not seem to be natural; most Catholics in England are Irish or half-Irish; and naturally the Irish are perhaps as much inclined to quarrel, as hot-blooded and fond of a “row,” as any nation under the sun. Still if they quarrel about other things, yet never about their faith. In other matters they might be at daggers drawn, but speak a word against the Pope, the priest, the Mass, our Blessed Lady, and instantly you made them one. Money might divide them, temper might divide them, evil tongues might divide them, but the Faith made them one. Their religion kept a bond among them, and drew them together. It did not, of course, destroy temptations to disunion. While God united, the devil would still try to tear asunder. Difference of rank, difference of temper, difference of

wealth, difference of interests, would keep pulling them asunder; in the midst of all here was one religion, the Catholic religion, which powerfully pulled men together. I found if men quarrelled, by-and-by the Confessional got hold of them and they were kneeling side by side at the one altar, taking the one Communion; and where the devil and nature had divided, Faith, which seemed above nature, had united. When they were widest asunder, they were still one in Faith, and out of this oneness of Faith came at last a oneness of love.

I looked abroad to other nations. I said, the one grand thing which parts man from man is the difference of nations, the struggle of race with race, of tongue with tongue. Difference of nations makes difference of interests; it is stronger than the oneness of human nature. To be an Englishman is something more with us than to be a man; and we love not the whole human race, but our own little part of it in our own little island corner of the big world. Is there any religion which can leap over mountains and bridge over seas, and, spite of different races and different tongues, can bind men together into one family, and widen their hearts to love—not a section of the human race,—but all mankind; like the love of the great God, Who made all alike, Who made at the first not nations but one nation to be the children all of one Adam. This, at least, the Protestant religion has not done. The one English race it has split up into many warring sects, but it has united not a single nation under the sun to England in the bonds of faith and love.

What the Protestant religion had not done, that I could not help seeing the Catholic faith had done. I was making the enquiry about the time that the doctrine of the

Immaculate Conception was declared at Rome. There I saw men of all nations under the sun gathered together at Rome, all agreeing, all one. Something powerful had brought them together, something stronger than their difference of nation, and their difference of tongue, and of national interests. Nature would keep them apart; something stronger than nature had brought them together; what was that something stronger? One faith coming from One God, making men, like God, one. I said, where else in the world can this strange thing be done? In what other of the world's cities can I see all nations assembled of their own free accord, agreeing about one thing? I was obliged to make answer to myself, nowhere but in Rome. And I said, this is the modern Pentecost, here is Whit-Sunday going on, here is the finger of God. Here is a bond which, while wars disunite and interests keep pulling asunder, draws men together and forbids that the world should wholly fall to pieces. This is the salt of the earth, which will not let it corrupt as it would. Of course while God unites the devil disunites; wars there must be, but in the midst of the wars here is the faith drawing together, and holding together, and binding again and again into one family! And I said, God is one; where men are one, there God is.

IX.

"Where God is, men may become more one, but cannot become less one."

THERE came a difficulty. "Men said Catholics are not so united as they call themselves: it is true that we do not hear of High Catholics, Low Catholics, Broad Catholics;

but we *do* hear of Ultramontane Catholics and Liberal Catholics; we do hear of Catholics who believe the Immaculate Conception and Catholics who do not believe it. Now what is the great difference between Catholics and Protestants? Both have questions on which they differ: Catholic oneness is not so very grand after all."

In the first place, was it true?

It was true: all Catholics did not quite agree about the Immaculate Conception; they all agree now, but there was a time at which they did not all agree; they were so far not quite one. All Catholics did not agree about the power of the Pope, they all agree now, but they did not agree then.

It was true, and Catholics knew it to be true, and yet, though Catholics are not more unreasonable than the rest of men, they all declared themselves to be one, and clearly thought themselves honestly to be one. They seemed to think that Catholics could disagree on some points and yet be one for all that. This struck me: Protestants did not claim to be one. A Baptist is not eager to make men believe that the Baptists and the Church of England are all entirely, outwardly and inwardly, one. In the Church of England itself the Evangelical abhors Ritualism as much or more than he abhors Popery itself. So then the Protestants quarrelled and did not pretend to be one; the Catholics quarrelled, and yet believed and declared they were one all the time. Was there any difference in the way of their quarrelling?

Thinking about it, I found it was so. Protestant quarrels destroyed oneness, Catholic quarrels did not destroy oneness; they might lessen oneness, make it less perfect, but they did not destroy it. Protestant quarrels were the

quarrels of enemies, at least of different families ; Catholic quarrels were the quarrels of brothers, children of one family disputing before their father, ready to be silent the moment their father spoke, and never dreaming of being anything but brothers all the time. Their love of their father and their love of each other made it safe for them to dispute without fear of their coming to blows and turning each other out of their father's house.

Now, first of all—to put down the differences in a business-like manner—the points on which Catholics disputed were so very few. At this moment they dispute about nothing, there is no one point on which Catholic differs from Catholic. Then, at the time of my enquiry, there were but two points, the Immaculate Conception and the power of the Pope. Yet Catholics believe a great many things, an immense number of things, and of all that immense number of things there was not one on which they differed, save only on those two points, the Immaculate Conception, and the power of the Pope. It was difficult to find anything in which Protestant agreed with Protestant. That was the difference, and it seemed to me not a little one. In fact I could not think, and I cannot to this day think, of a single doctrine on which every Protestant agrees with every Protestant, unless it be the mere belief that there is a God. On that I suppose all do agree. On the other hand I could not think of any doctrine on which every Catholic did not agree with every Catholic, except only the Immaculate Conception and the power of the Pope.

Then secondly, when Protestants differed, each declared the other to be clean out of the way of salvation. They disputed about the very way of being saved. He who trusts in baptism is lost ; he who does not trust in baptism

is lost. He who does not believe himself to be already saved is lost ; he who does believe himself already saved is a monster of pride ; and is therefore lost. There is but one God and one Person in God ; There is one God and three Persons in God. Our Lord did not die for all : our Lord died for all. Some persons are born for heaven, some for hell ; God wills all to be in heaven, none to be in hell. Such were the different doctrines which I have myself heard, or which I have known to have been preached, from the pulpits of the Church of England, not to speak of the various Dissenters. The quarrels were not about a grace or a power given to some creature of God, but about God Himself, about our Blessed Lord, about the way of being saved. Do this or you are lost, cried one ; do it not or you are lost, cried another ; believe this or you are lost, rang from one pulpit ; believe it not or you are lost, rang from another. So that after eighteen hundred years of Christianity men still know nothing of God and nothing of the way to be saved. Now in the Catholic dispute there was nothing of this. So long as the dispute lasted no one said to the other, you cannot be saved unless you believe as I ; all agreed about the way to be saved, all agreed about the foundations, the beginnings of the faith.

Thirdly, in Catholic disputes no one dreamed of making a sect out of the quarrel. If there were any who doubted about the Immaculate Conception, they knelt side by side with those who believed it. There were no separate churches built for the new connection. No Catholic was so sure that he himself was right that his "conscience" forbade him to worship with the rest. He thought and let think ; he did not set himself up for Apostle or Prophet ; and he was at peace with all.

And so, fourthly, it came that they were, as I said before, like obedient children contending before their father ; they waited for their father to speak ; they were ready to drop their own views the moment their father spoke ; they still were, as our Lord says we should be, like " little children," humble and content to be taught, loving and affectionate, and so not willing to quarrel with those they loved, or to be parted from them.

And so I began to see how it was true that Catholics disputed and that Protestants disputed ; but how it was true also that the disputes were of different kinds and that the difference between them was wide. The one kind of dispute was with charity, they disputed like brethren ; the other was without it ; the one was with humility, each man thought little of his own judgement, and was ready to give it up ; the other was with pride, each man thought himself a prophet : and so the one kind of dispute destroyed oneness, the other not only did not destroy it but positively increased it ; with every dispute Protestants grew less one, and parted more widely asunder ; with every dispute Catholics grew more one and drew more closely together. They differed, if indeed they differed, about the Immaculate Conception, now they differ no more ; they differed about the power of the Pope, now they differ no more. Their oneness has become more one ; but their differences before did not destroy their oneness, for they did not destroy their charity, they did not make them set up sects, or refuse to worship with their neighbours, or disobey their spiritual teachers, or do or say any of those things which come of disunion.

I saw then how unity might grow ; how the Church might become more perfect in unity, how unity might be

made more manifest, more clear, just as the Church might become more holy as the number of its saints increased, or more Catholic as it spread itself into the New World or conquered the world's nations one by one, or even more Apostolic as it gathered itself with more and more devotion about the See of Rome. The marks of the Church might increase and grow more beautiful, but because they were more beautiful to-day, it would not follow that they did not exist or were not beautiful yesterday.

And looking into the Scriptures I found that it was in this way they spoke of the oneness of the Church, as a thing which grew like the growing of the body. "He gave some Apostles," says St. Paul (Ephesians iv. 16), "and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Doctors."

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

"Until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

"That * * * speaking the truth in love we may grow up into Him in all things which is the Head, even Christ.

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*

Here is growth, increase, and I saw that Catholic disputes were the healthy efforts of the body after growth, after more perfect oneness, and that Protestant quarrels were a disease, the tearing of limb from limb, the rending of the body into a thousand fragments.

* Prot. Vers.

X.

"If the Spirit be One, the Body must be One also."

I COULD not help seeing—I do not think that the human being lives who can help seeing—that the mark of oneness is on the Church of Rome. Say what you will about it, say it is brought about by tyranny or by superstition, or what you will, there it is. Rome is one, and none is one but Rome.

The Anglican High Church clergymen about me did not deny the fact. They simply jumped over it. I suppose that I jumped with them without looking much before I leapt; now the jump appears to me the most astonishing feat ever performed by reasonable beings. They quietly said, "Oh! unity is lost, it is taken away for the sins of the people. The Church was once outwardly one, and will be perhaps outwardly one again; but meanwhile, for the last thousand years or so the sign of oneness has been taken away, and the Church has been divided into three parts, the Greek branch, the English branch, and the Roman branch. They do not all believe the same things of course now; in fact they believe very different things; but they will believe the same thing by-and-bye, when the Pope gives up thinking himself infallible, and calls a real General Council of the three branches. Meanwhile, the Church is not outwardly one, it is inwardly one after a fashion, but unity as a sign is gone.

As for the Faith it is a matter of geography. If you are born this side of the English Channel, you must of course not believe in a purgatory, and quite right; but if you are born the other side of the English Channel, you must believe in a purgatory, and quite right. You are bound to

hear the Church, and you must hear it in France as well as England, and in England as well as France."

Now, first of all, they quietly took for granted that unity was lost. There was this very suspicious state of affairs. England which had not the mark of oneness upon it said, "Unity was lost for the sins of the people, especially for the sins of Rome"—a most comfortable way of accounting for its not having the sign of oneness; Rome which had the sign of oneness upon it said, "Unity is not lost." If it had been the other way, if the Church which was one within itself had told us unity was lost, we might have believed it; but when the Church that was torn to fragments told us unity was lost a thousand years ago by the fault of other people, it looked so exceedingly like the excuse of persons who had to make the best of a bad job, that it was utterly impossible to attach any importance to it. "I am the Church." "Oh! but you are not one." "No: nor are you; nobody is one, oneness is lost," was just the only answer that could possibly be made by a Church that had so hopelessly lost unity that it could not put in any pretension to it.

And then the excuse was so wholly without any argument to back it. It simply rested on the word of the religious body which clearly had no unity itself—on that and that only.

Had our Blessed Lord or His Apostles prophesied to us disunion? Had He or they said that the Church might be one in spirit and not one in body? On the contrary, our Lord had prayed for unity which should be the shadow of the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; an entire unity of mind and will and being.

Had the Fathers ever spoken of inward unity as possible

without outward unity? On the contrary, ever did they speak of the Church as one in body and in soul. Talk of new doctrines to be found neither in Scripture, nor in the Fathers, nor in the Councils of the Church:—when ever was a doctrine to be found so new, so utterly strange to scripture and the Fathers as the doctrine, “There is no need of outward unity; it is not a necessary part of the being of the Church?”

Was there any type of it in the history of the Jews? None whatever. On the contrary; whatever the sins of the Jewish people, they never lost their mark of unity. The ten tribes were torn from the two politically, but not religiously, and still there was but one Holy City; one Temple; one Place of Sacrifice; one High Priest; one Ark; one Presence of God. It was the one grand sin—never forgiven—of the Kings of Israel that they were not content with being Kings of the tribes, but must be High Priests too—making other Jerusalems, other sacrifices, other priests, at Bethel and at Dan. It was the grand sin of the Samaritan, of whom was *not* salvation, that he made to himself another Temple and another holy mount besides the one Temple and the one Mount of God. Wicked as the Jews were, their unity was never lost; the Samaritans were no branch of the Jews, nor were the calves at Dan and Bethel fellow-presences of God with the presence that dwelt upon the Ark.

Nor did the holders of this new teaching seem to see that they entirely destroyed the authority of the Church. If the Church cannot prove herself to be from God, who is to believe her, and why need she be believed? If she herself says that she has lost the sign of God's presence, by what right does she profess to teach mankind? If God is

not with her oneness, why is He with her teaching? No one need believe a Prophet who has not on him the marks of a Prophet.

“Oh! but she had unity once—and therefore should be believed.”

Quite so; and she lost the unity, and therefore ought not to be believed. Who would listen to a Prophet who had lost the marks of a Prophet! If you believed what he had said while he had the marks, still his voice would be worth nothing, and less than nothing, when he had lost them.

Therefore, if God has taken away the marks of unity from the Church, no one can possibly be bound to join the Church. The duty of joining it rests upon the proofs it shows that it is from God. The Church has no claim unless it be God's messenger. If it cannot prove itself to be God's messenger, it is an impostor, and deserves the contempt due to an impostor. To give up the sign of unity is to give up the Church altogether.

Nor did they seem to see that to give up outward unity was to permit any number of schisms, any amount of dissent. If the Church could be divided outwardly into three parts, it could be divided into five hundred. The Wesleyans, the Baptists, and the rest would have quite as much right to say, and quite as good proofs to give, that they inwardly belonged to the Church from which they were outwardly separated. Indeed, if unity is taken away, what is schism? Is there such a sin any longer? Schism is the attempt to destroy unity, but if God has taken unity away, where lies the sin?

Nor did they seem to see that their new teaching utterly destroyed faith, and almost compelled infidelity. In

England the Holy Spirit taught no Purgatory, no outward Unity, no Infallibility of the Pope, &c. In France the same Holy Spirit taught to the Frenchman Purgatory, outward Unity, Infallibility, and all the things that in England He denied. For Dover no Purgatory; for Calais Purgatory. What, I have sometimes asked in the bitterness of my heart, in mid-channel? In Rome and England the Holy Spirit proceeds from Father and Son—pass on to the Greek branch and He proceeds from the Father only. When truth has thus become a shuttlecock, to toss from nation to nation, when the Holy Spirit is made to deny and contradict Himself, who will believe longer that it exists at all; the only hope for truth is to say, that one Church is wholly right and the other two wholly wrong; that one speaks by the voice of God, and the others by the voice of God's enemy.

And so still the marvel rests upon me, that men of education and of goodness can hold views so strangely unsupported by reason—or by anything else.

XI.

In God's Body all members will be made one by every bond of oneness.

THE Oneness of God is perfect. All creatures must be made in the likeness of God, for He is all being, and there is no other model upon which to fashion His creatures but Himself. Where among His creatures is found the most perfect oneness, there is the truest likeness of God; and the truest likeness of God is a picture that can be drawn by no artist but Himself. God made such a picture of Himself in His own human Soul and Body, and then

He gathered round that human nature of His, and wedded closely to it, a society, a body of His fellow-men, and He, being God, fashioned that society into a likeness of God. In that society then I expected to find, and surely expected rightly, not one bond only, but every bond which binds men one to the other. Our Lord is all-wise, and His society, the Church, His own creation, will be the work of perfect wisdom ; and when He leaves His society in a world which must always continue its enemy, He will in wisdom and in love gift it with that perfect oneness which is strength. Would not any wise man, who desired his society to last, strengthen it by all those means which should make it last? Nothing should be wanting that might make its oneness wholly one.

I had already asked of the Religions, which of them all made men one by one Faith, one Truth, and had found answer from none except only the Church of Rome. The oneness of Faith was a mark clear for all men to see upon Rome. But were there upon her still other marks of God's presence, other shadows of His oneness, placed upon her, but on none but her?

And the first answer made me was—"Yes: oneness of Order and of Government." The Church of Rome is a body, and the picture drawn by St. Paul is a picture of her; her Head is Christ and from Him "the whole Body is fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth." Ephes. iv. 16. The society of Christ, as Rome shows it to us, is a perfectly orderly society, a complete kingdom, with every arrangement proper to a kingdom, furnished with everything that shall bind its subjects together into a strong and united empire. There is no spot on the wide world where man can draw breath,

which is not subject to it and bound to listen to it, and yet so orderly is the society and so wisely and strongly fashioned, that the government of the great round world goes on sweetly and smoothly as if it were a matter of ease. The Head, the King, speaks, and from North Pole to South his officers take up the word, and everywhere at the one moment his officers and soldiers, one and all, obey, and at the one command millions upon millions will be doing the same thing, for the same reason, and with the same intention.

“It is in the Church of Rome as in the earliest dawn of man’s creation, when the whole race of man was but a small family, and Adam, their father, the king of all. He spoke and all obeyed. So in the Church of Rome, still the same fatherly rule goes on; all men gathered into one, and that one ruling by the power of the ever-present Head of the society, even Christ, ‘from Whom the whole body is fitly joined together and compacted.’ The small rule of the first Adam has grown into the world-wide empire of the second Adam ruling the countless multitude by fatherly love.”

The truth of this answer was brought home to me. I knew that of old times it was from Rome that men came at peril of their lives to teach our Saxon forefathers the Christianity which they soon learned to love so well, and while I was enquiring, twelve hundred years afterwards, from the same Rome came men and in her name entered anew upon her old possessions, with a quiet force which the world however angry could not withstand.

And I said, “Here is a likeness of God’s oneness. God is one Intellect, and here is one Faith; all know one

Truth: God is one Will, and here is a vast society willing the same act and obedient to the will of one."

I turned to other societies and found no such oneness.

What kind of society was the Church of England? To whom was I to look as her Head? To whom go in all my doubts and anxieties; Was it a whole "body fitly joined together and compacted?" I was answered, "Christ is our Head." Nay! but who are His officers? At one time His Apostles were His officers, and Peter spoke for them all. In the Church of England who are His officers, and who is still speaking for them all? The Prime Ministers who appoint bishops according to their politics, who reward a History of Greece with the souls of men? The temporal judges who decide spiritual disputes? The Queen whose name is but a fiction in the matter and who certainly does not claim and cannot claim to be "guided into all Truth?"

And I said, "Rome is a society for the whole world, a kingdom of heaven upon earth and with power to govern the world with ease. England is not a society even for herself; a headless Church, with no order among its officers, no discipline among its soldiers; is this the Kingdom of Christ? This the model society founded by boundless wisdom?"

It came to me to see then that Rome not only had a oneness of Faith, nowhere else found, but a oneness also of Order, Discipline, Government; a body-like unity—joint fitted to joint, sinew working with sinew, nerve answering to nerve—a unity which is surely the need of a society whose work it is to last for all ages, to bind together all peoples with all their differences of tongue and character and interests. If a petty society in a country town may fall to pieces easily for lack of strong order in

its constitution, how much would there be needed of the strong bonds of oneness in a world-wide society built for all time? Rome alone showed me this wondrous strength, more wondrous by reason of its quiet—no noise of army, no loudness of debate, no show of wealth, but “a still small voice” which gripped a world.

Rome’s oneness shone with another brightness which was hers alone—the oneness of worship. I was living in a small sea-port town, and on a Sunday there wandered into our church from time to time sailors from every nation under heaven. With one and all it was the same. They looked around and stared in blank wonderment; they stood for a few minutes perchance and “heard the parson pray and preach,” but what he prayed and what he preached they knew no more than they would have known had they been of another creation and not human at all. But I was told then, and I came afterwards to see for myself, that there was no such difficulty in churches that belonged to Rome. To Rome itself went men of all nations and gathered in the one church; knowing not each other’s tongue, unable to understand one word each other spoke, yet they could kneel side by side and join in the one worship exactly as if they had been in the town where they were born; and that one worship at which all nations knelt was the one worship at which all nations had knelt since the Crucifixion; the one great worship of God which goes on for ever, at which Mary and John assisted beneath the Cross, the worship begun and carried on by the One God Himself, Who made Himself our Head.

And I said, “Here is oneness indeed. Here is an act in which all join, a language which all understand. This is

the day of Pentecost still going on; 'Parthians and Medes and Elamites, devout men of every nation under heaven,' for them all were the wonderful works of God made as clear in the one worship as if the priest had spoken to every man in 'his own tongue wherein he was born.'"

And I said, "There is nothing Divine in each nation having a worship which its own people can understand. But a worship in which all nations can join with equal ease, kneeling side by side, is a worship which can come only from the One Maker of all mankind."

XII.

"The Truth of the Creator must be suited to all His creatures."

It seemed to me that oneness could not be fully seen unless there went with it at the same time the thought of Catholicity. The greater the number who are clasped together in unity, the greater is the marvel of the oneness. I asked myself therefore which of all the religions in the world is clearly not a national religion, nor a race religion, but a world religion? (The world religion must be the true one.)

Why? Because all men were made by God; therefore, the knowledge of God, the real religion of God, must suit equally all whom God has made.

If a nation, or a group of nations, made a religion for itself, I could understand that it would make it according to its national whims and fancies, and that while it might stick to it itself (for who does not like his own creation?) it would not, or rather could not, make it to please other nations; to other nations therefore it would not spread.

Indeed even in itself it would not last; the nation would find that there were cravings in human nature which its religion had not satisfied; or that the national character or the national circumstances had changed, and what suited it at one time did not suit it at another. So its religion would change; it would sway with politics, alter with Kings and Prime Ministers; the nation would keep patching it up; clipping a bit out to-day, putting a patch in to-morrow; borrowing something here and there; pilfering from the true religion, which the while would have held on its way undisturbed, waiting till the poor old patched coat which the nation had made for itself should drop utterly to pieces. So it could neither spread nor last.

Thus must it be with man-made, nation-made religions; they will be fashioned for part of human nature, not for the whole; for a time of human history, not for all time. They are part religions, weak with human weakness, mixed iron and clay, the iron stolen from the Truth, the clay only original.

But so it cannot be with God's religion. God made the world, and His religion, that is, the true knowledge of God, the true laws of God, and the true worship of God, must be a world religion, a religion suitable to every nation, and every human being in the nation, and every year and month and day of every nation's history. Be men savage or civilized, educated or ignorant, kings or peasants, God's religion will be "all things to all men."

Therefore, the true religion of God will have such signs as this upon it:—

1. It will make its way into all nations, more or less.

I say more or less purposely. It will not of necessity convert everybody in all nations, because in all nations

there will be minds who will hate the truth. Sin is as Catholic as the Truth of God—in some sense as fitted to human nature as human nature now is. Therefore where the Truth is and the followers of the Truth, there also probably will be resisters of the Truth, just as our Lord converted not all the Jews, nay not most of the Jews—gleaned rather than harvested.

Yet in each nation there will be sufficient to “bear witness to the truth,” sufficient that is to show that the true religion is as well fitted to the mind of that nation as to the minds of other nations, and that, if it does not make more way, it is from some national circumstances, some peculiar difficulty, easy to be seen.

2. It will make its way by its own power—by the simple force of truth—not by the sword, as with the Mahometan; nor by wealth; nor by any natural power. Indeed, it, and it only, will put such force into men’s minds, that it will make way spite of sword and wealth, and every other human power: conquering at last by the simple strength of truth.

3. Once received into men’s minds it will live on—live on without change—with development indeed, and fulness, but not change; the same old light, growing indeed in brilliancy, or showing now one colour of the rainbow, and now another, as it plays upon the clouds which men’s sin and error raise, but still the same old light. And it will live on so strongly that it can hardly be stamped out. Nations will cling to it through trial of fire. It is dead, yet, behold it lives. For it is God’s food on which God’s creatures live; and other death is nothing, if they do not die of the famine of God’s Truth.

And by this proof I tried the religions of the world;—

which was the world religion, the religion that pleased all nations, and all times—and I found no world religion but the Catholic Faith.

For first I could find no country under the sun into which the Catholic Faith had not made its way, and made sufficient converts to show that it was fitted to the mind of the people.

On the other hand, looking at the religions of England and of Germany, I could find no nations in which they had really made way and spread themselves.

In the new world it seemed to me that God had set this difference clearly before the eyes of men. To Protestantism was given, speaking roughly, North America; to Catholicity, South America. Where are the native tribes of South America? Mixed with the Spaniards, and Catholics as they. Where are the tribes of North America? Gone unconverted to utter destruction; swept before the judgment seat with the sins of the white man, but not his religion.

In Australia, in New Zealand, the same. In Hindostan again there was the same contrast as in America. St. Francis Xavier went there, and in the ten years' labour of one man, hundreds of thousands had received the Faith. England went and stayed there for centuries, and if England left to-morrow, she would leave, speaking roughly, not a Protestant Hindoo behind. Catholic congregations would be there, but no native Protestants. So the ten years of one man have been greater, by a boundless distance, than the centuries of a nation.

What was the hindrance of England? Never had a nation fairer chance. Men and means were hers, and absolute dominion—What hindrance? I was obliged to

answer, "the teaching that England bore suited not the mind of the heathen, and, therefore, is not from God."

China again. England has had fair chance, if any nation, to spread her faith among the Chinese. In the length and breadth of that vast Empire is there a native Protestant to be found?

But here and there in that vast Empire is many a Christian village, and in the towns, Christian congregations, and even Christian churches and cathedrals—whose are they? The congregations formed by Catholic Missionaries, who shed their blood for souls, while the English bartered for tea, and who by their blood formed, centuries ago, congregations which never-ending persecution and martyrdom have not been able to destroy.

And I looked for other proofs, besides China, that the Catholic Faith so took hold of a people that no persecution could stamp it out, and I found them in distant Japan, and even at home in Ireland. In Japan, a deluge of savage persecution had—so the rulers thought—swept Catholicity, in the moment of great successes, out of the land. But, lo! 200 years pass by, Japanese ports are opened once more, and there, in the pleasant villages of Japan, are the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. The native Catholics, without priest, without sacraments, without churches, had still lived on, and father to son had handed down the Faith.

And for Ireland: if I was struck by the contrast between Protestant North America and Catholic South America: if I was struck when I compared the fruitfulness of St. Francis Xavier with the barren efforts of England in India; still more was I struck with the difference, that God has made plain before our eyes, between England and Ireland.

There a nation clinging to its old Catholic Faith in equal contempt of persecution and of bribe—clinging to the Faith through centuries of poverty and neglect and sorrow ; here a nation, with no persecution and no sorrow, over which the religion it had made for itself had utterly lost its hold : a nation which had found its self-chosen faith so little suited to its needs, that the masses of its huge towns had sunk in sheer despair into the cold dark gulf of indifference and infidelity. And as I looked at home, I wondered no more that other nations were not converted to the English faith, for England clearly did not believe her faith herself. She had patched, and she had changed, but she had not won her people.

And I said “The Faith of Rome suits all nations—the faith of England does not so much as suit herself.”

XIII.

“Falschood cannot be more loving than Truth.”

I HAD said “The greater the number who are clasped together in unity, the greater is the marvel of the oneness. The world religion must be the true one. Oneness would not be one if it left out some : Catholicity would not be universal if it did not embrace all.”

But I came to see that even the width of the world was not wide enough for the true religion. There was a wider Catholicity, and, therefore, a more wonderful oneness than even this. God is everywhere: in heaven as on earth; and His love is not bounded by this world. All beings live in the One God ; and wherever He is, He loves all who do not wholly scorn His love. Loving them Himself, He bids them love each other ; and that they may do so, He

joins them all in one—in the oneness which comes of love. Angels and men—men on the earth, and men who have passed away from earth—all still living in the one living God, must be joined together into one in Him.

This oneness, it is true, cannot be seen; rarely do the children of God in heaven show themselves to the children of God on earth: not many men see the vision of Jacob, the Angels ascending and descending: not many behold an Angel of the Lord, and hear his voice bringing good tidings, and suddenly with him a multitude of the Heavenly Host praising God in the language of man. This oneness of Heaven and earth is shown to the eyes of few. But, though it cannot be seen by the eyes, the idea of such oneness can be understood by the mind—and it seemed to me, clear beyond all doubt, that the idea, the picture, of oneness given by error, could not be more full of love and beauty than the picture given us by Truth. Even the devil's giant intellect could not conceive a fictitious love greater than the real love of Christ. The highest idea—the most God-like idea—must be the truest. The idea most worthy of God, most unearthly, must have come from God.

The picture given me by the religions of England was that the one God, Who is power, and wisdom, and love, had not united in one the nations now living on the earth; and that He had wholly cut off, fixed a great gulf between, the living of to-day and those who passed away yesterday: the one lived, the others were blotted out: bye and bye they might meet again; now the separation was complete: and the same gulf lay between that race of man which He loved so truly as to make it His own race, and our elder brothers, the Angels, who visited us, indeed, in the days of

old, who walked with Adam in the garden, and spoke to Moses, and fed Elias, and ministered to our Lord, and smote off Peter's chains, but who now had gone back to their thrones and left us to ourselves.

This the picture painted by England's religions, and there was nothing in it divine, nothing of love or beauty. In it was the blackness of death. God is life, I knew; and Easter Day, I also knew, had conquered death; and Ascension Day had opened heaven, and joined heaven and earth in one, and Whit-Sunday had lifted up earth to heaven and joined them still more in one. But in England's picture there was still the blackness of death. "O death, where is thy victory?" A very decided victory it seemed to me, for it parted men with all the power of an utter destruction. The death of Christ had not destroyed death.

What was the picture of oneness given me by Rome? "Your Lord died," it said, "and He went away, and is so far parted that you see Him no more till you yourself die; but He is not wholly gone away, He is truly on earth still, as truly as in heaven; and He joins Himself to you and is with you, with you in the flesh, really and truly, though you see Him not.

"And as with Him, so with all who die in His love; so with the angels who surround Him in heaven. You are a member of Christ's kingdom, of His society, so are the angels: you are a member of Christ's society, so are the saints: so is the baptised baby who died yesterday: so are the dead who are still lingering awhile in the ante-chamber of heaven—in the happy pains, the joy-sorrow, the willing crucifixion of purgatory.

"Death has not conquered; speak to your baby who

died yesterday, he is closer to you, though not indeed in the flesh as our dear Lord is, than when he lay at your breast ; speak to him sprung up suddenly into the glory of his full manhood, into the splendour of a reason which looks upon God : speak to him and wreath his little picture with flowers of honour, he will pray for you, he will bring you blessing, he will feed you who nurtured him, and death has not parted you. It is he who lives, and loves, and lovingly helps you, and his life is a truer life than your own, and in that life he is not parted from you. O death, where is thy sting?"

And thus was the length and breadth of Catholicity put before me. "All that God loves is yours, and yours now ; you need not wait till you get to heaven : to-day you are a fellow-citizen with the saints: to-day "you are come to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Countless hosts of angels—"a great multitude which no man can number of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne, and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," all these are yours, members with you of the society of Christ. Honour them, love them, cry out to them, and they standing before the Lamb shall hear your cry and pour down by their prayers the blessings of heaven upon you.

And those others, waiting so patiently in the vestibule till the Bridegroom open the door, hungering and thirsting for His presence, yet so patient, His countless host of suffering ones—take the wine and oil of sacrifice and prayer and pour it into their wounds. See! you are not parted : the sting of death, it is true, is sin ; and that sting is still working its work of pain upon them, but you can

pluck it out. The dead of yesterday, whom you tended so lovingly in his long agony, still needs your aid. You will pray for him and he for you, and your loving hands can still relieve his pain, and his grateful prayers can still strengthen you in your struggle with sin. This is not separation."

Here was a Catholicity indeed. All God's creatures that God loved, all God's creatures who had not scorned His love, all mine. All nations were one; the dead and living were one, there were none really dead; angels and men were one; all one in the one Christ, all one in the one God—and I said: "England's Catholicity does not even wish to reach beyond the earth. The members of England's religions are not fellow-citizens with the saints. They do not rise with our Lord above the world, and even in the world they do not reach to all or nearly all "the nations and tribes and peoples and tongues;" and I said, "Rome's Catholicity cannot be false, for falsehood could not fashion a Catholicity wider than the Catholicity which God has made: falsehood could not conceive a unity more one than the oneness of Truth. Rome's Catholicity which reaches to heaven and earth and below the earth—Rome's unity in which death can make no parting—is the Catholicity and the unity of God."

XIV.

"God is Holy; where God is, there is Holiness."

How far have we gone? We have settled—

1. The way to find God's truth is to listen to God's teachers.

2. There are many teachers of religion all professing to be from God.

3. They cannot all be right.

4. God enables men to tell true prophets from false prophets, true Christs from false Christs.

5. He does this by putting on them signs; on the true prophets signs of His presence, on the false prophets signs of His absence.

6. It is our duty to look for these signs; yet are they so plain that the poor and unlearned can see them.

7. In comparing the different religious bodies which now claim to be the prophets of God, we find the signs of God's presence on the Church of Rome, and nowhere but on her.

8. The first sign we find is oneness: Rome is one; none else is one but Rome.

9. The second sign we find is Catholicity: width as well as oneness: a width which covers all whom God's love covers: Rome is Catholic: none is Catholic but Rome.

The next sign we will take is holiness. God is holy. Where God is among men, there will holiness in some way shine out to the world.

We say in some way; and we speak guardedly, because in thinking of God's holiness we have always to remember another truth; God is holy—but man is free. God will not force His holiness upon man: so that He leaves to man the power—each man for himself—to disturb and trouble this sign of holiness. And this makes the sign all the more wonderful; God must make His holiness shine out, and shine out through man, spite of man's unholiness. The holy must appear, and appear clearly and in a marked way, through the unholy. Though men still have left to them the fulness of their human nature, though they still

have their wayward wills, though they still have power to rebel against God; yet over the chosen body of men by whom God chooses to speak Truth to the world must somehow shine a holiness which could not come of nature, and which must therefore come of God's presence.

Let us count up some of these signs of God's holiness—

Firstly,—Such a body of men will possess an *idea* of holiness which will be higher than the idea possessed by any other body. It may be that the lives of many individuals may fall sadly short of that idea: it might be that even most individuals in the body might so fall sadly short; it is probable that it would be so from the very height of the idea—the higher the thought of holiness the more difficult to reach:—Moses and Joshua only came near the top of Sinai—the straiter the gate the fewer there be that find it. All this may well be; but the possession of the idea is by itself a great proof; nay, the more unholy the body, the more wonderful would it be that it should have so high an idea of holiness; the unholy do not have holy thoughts—they are fleshly and worldly:—whence then came the body by such splendid thoughts of holiness? Whence except from God?

I compared, therefore, the ideas of holiness in the different bodies, and I found that the idea of holiness in Rome was far higher and holier than the idea of holiness anywhere else. Let me try and work this out.

That which makes a man holy, or a body of men holy, is the nearness of God. God lived among the people of Israel, therefore was Israel holy. "What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" Think a moment of the nearness of God to Israel. By His

angel He lived among them. The spot where He dwelt was known to them. On a mountain, in a temple, behind a veil, over a chest of wood, there was God. He spoke and they heard His voice. On the peak of that Arabian mountain there men heard Him, there some chosen ones saw His glory. In the cleft of such a rock there trembled Moses while God passed by. But more, He not only thundered from Sinai, He not only spake of old time, but *now* in the lifetime of each child of Israel until the captivity, lo! God lived and spoke from the ark, and men questioned Him and He answered. Truly, however wicked the Jews might be, yet Jerusalem was holy, for God dwelt there; however wicked the Philistines, yet was the ark holy among them, where for a time God permitted Himself to be bound, as it were, and led captive among them, as afterwards He let Himself be bound in the hall of Caiphas or at the pillar of scourging. Here was a holiness of the city which did not depend on the holiness of the citizens; a holiness of the Jewish nation viewed as a body, though many or most of the Jews were wicked. The unholiness of Hophni and Phineas could not make the ark unholy, nor destroy the presence of God.

The body then which teaches the greatest nearness of God has, in one point at least, the highest idea of holiness. It lays claim to the highest holiness; and a holiness coming in no way from itself but from God, and therefore giving honour to God only. I will take for granted that we shall all agree, if we think of it for one moment, that God cannot be less near after the Crucifixion than He was to the Jews before the Crucifixion.

Searching I found that Rome taught the greatest near-

ness of God, both to the body, the society, and to the individual.

It seemed to me that no religious society but Rome only taught the nearness of God to itself *as a body*, the indwelling of God in it as a *society*, the same sort of indwelling, not dependent on the holiness of individuals, by which He was pleased to dwell amongst the Jews.

For Rome teaches that in the Catholic Church—as *in a body*—God dwells with a living working presence *to-day*; not a past presence of 1900 years ago—not an historical presence read of in the Bible—but a living presence of *to-day*: as the soul of him who writes this is to-day present in his body, living and acting, and holding the body together, so God is present to-day—not in the individual only—but in the Church as a body, with a living presence by which He is felt and heard in the world as He was felt of old times from over the ark within the veil. So that the immediate nearness of God is one of the things of to-day—belongs to the nineteenth century—touches us amongst the other realities of life, and is a present concern of the moment to *me*. Nor is it a shadow, nor a thought, nor a fancy, nor a misty thing difficult to grasp—but a true presence which can be touched and heard, and which stirs the world of to-day, moving among its armies, its revolutions, its politics, its thoughts, its inventions. See! I am putting words together simply to try and make you feel this nearness of God, this ‘neighbourness’ of God, as I felt it when I became a Catholic—I entered the Church, and lo! I stood in the presence of God.

But let us be clear about this presence. What do I mean? I am speaking now of the invisible presence of God in His Church as a body, by which the body is holy,

though many or most of the individuals should be unholy. Rome's idea of holiness is that God the Holy Ghost came down on Whit-Sunday to live—not only in the individual—but in the body; that He has not returned to heaven, but dwells now as He dwelt then. His presence makes the body holy: where God is, there is infinite holiness: and it produces to-day—as of yore—divers fruits of holiness. One fruit is truth. Truth is a great part of holiness—nothing can be holy which is false. The Holy Ghost thus dwelling in His Church produces truth; this truth does not come from the holiness of individuals, nor depend on the holiness of individuals; it comes from the presence of God, and God produces holiness spite of the weakness of man; the truth is holy, though the mouth of the speaker be unholy, just as Balaam's blessing was a true blessing, spite of Balaam's sin. So through erring man God in the body produces truth—for with God nothing is impossible.

And this truth is without blemish, like the Lamb of the Sacrifice; there is no spot of error, for error is unholy. And this truth reaches to the knowledge of God; there can be no lie about God: and to the knowledge of the way to reach God; and to the knowledge of God's will, of what we must do and what we must not do.

We know this part of holiness by the name of infallibility. Infallibility is the living presence of God to-day in the body teaching truth, and such teaching of truth is part of holiness. Without it, right might be taught for wrong and wrong for right.

Such living nearness of God to-day is taught only by Rome.

No other body claims perfect purity of truth through God's indwelling in itself.

So far, then, Rome has an *idea* of holiness which is as much holier than the idea of other bodies, as perfect truth is holier than error: nay! claims that idea as a living power which rules itself.

XV.

"The Indwelling of God is the source of Holiness."

WHERE was I to find God? That was the question that I was asking myself. Among the answers given, this one at least seemed clear to me:—God cannot dwell in a body which denies that He is there. If men say "God is not amongst us," or—that which comes to the same thing—"one of His attributes is not amongst us," how possibly can He be dwelling in the midst of them? And yet it is His indwelling which must be the source of holiness to men. There is no other holiness than His.

When I put Rome side by side with other forms of Christianity, Rome claimed to have God within her; other bodies not only denied His presence, but some at least gloried in His absence. Strong words! yet they seemed even then true, and now I know them to be true, with still greater certainty.

We have already spoken of one point in which Rome only claims God's presence. Truth is holy; falsehood is unholy; truth about God is the holiest of truths; a lie about God is the unholiest of lies. A lie about God is not only an insult to infinite truth, and, therefore, unholiest of lies, but it must of necessity bring forth unholiness amongst His creatures. That which is against His nature must be against His will; that which is against His will is unholy. If then His nature is put before His creatures falsely, it is

not possible for them to act according to His nature and His will, for they know it not. Falsehood, then, it seemed to me, about religion is the unholiest of lies, and, therefore, that a Church may have upon her the mark of holiness, she must claim to have truth, and perfect spotless truth. She cannot be holy if God is not present: and God, Who is truth, cannot be present and teach falsehood.

Rome only claimed this part of holiness. England, in her many forms of religion, England, even in the Prayer Book which her "Church" put into my hands, said "No; we have it not. Every man is entitled to his own opinion; perfect truth belongs to no system, and every part of the Church, much more every man, may err." She claimed as her heritage, as her pearl of great price, the unholiness of error.

Rome said, "God is within me: God is Truth: and the Truth is given me by the presence of God." She spoke after the fashion of St. Paul, "I am true indeed, and yet not I, but Christ Who liveth in me." "By the grace of God I am what I am."

Religions which disclaimed the presence of God were by their own mouths declared unholy; and Rome only claimed it.

There is still another presence of God on which I could compare Rome and England, not indeed with the same knowledge with which I can compare them now that I have known both, but yet I could compare, for I believed the doctrine which taught that presence.

The society of Christ is made holy by the presence of Christ; not only by a hidden union with Him, His society on earth joined hiddenly in its Head in heaven, but by the

actual presence of His living body within His society on earth.

Such a doctrine was clearly a doctrine of love and of holiness. Every building used as a Roman Church was holy with a great holiness, a holiness which the wickedness of men could not lessen, if Christ was there as truly as He is in heaven. Soul and body and every power of soul and every part of body, the marvellous human intellect of Christ, and that tenderest human Heart of Christ, and all the treasure of His blood, price of our salvation, and His five open ever-pleading wounds, and all His glory of soul and body as it is in heaven, though unseen—if He was there, and with Him, for they cannot be parted, Father and Holy Spirit one God with the Son, in every Church which was joined to Rome throughout the world, here was a holiness which, spite of man's sin, still kept the Church holy, aye! which still made the great sinful earth dear to His Father, for, spite of all its gathered sins, still on countless spots all around the world could His Father look down and say, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased."

But more:—here was incarnate holiness dwelling in the body in places beyond counting—but not in each of His fellow-men.

The great round earth had become a new earth indeed, a lower heaven, for it was the special dwelling chosen by God for Himself, a dwelling in which He had "many mansions," countless places in which to "lay His head."

But there is another presence still. "Behold! I am with you all days, even to the consummation," or ending, "of the world," was the promise to His society, His Church. "If any love Me, My Father will love him, and We will

come and make our abode with him," was the promise to the individual. "Nearer than the Church," was the teaching of Rome to me, "nearer than the Tabernacle on the altar, shall Jesus be to you. You yourself shall be His heaven. Into your soul, into your body, shall His body and soul enter. Communion is the great act of union by which Christ the Head joins the members of His body to Himself. As you are joined to the first Adam, sharing by nature in that ever-flowing river of life which first flowed from him, so are you joined to the second Adam, body to body, soul to soul, by a union more complete and more direct, drinking into yourself the wealth and the grandeur, the purity and the nobility, of that renewed nature which He wedded to Himself in the marriage chamber of Mary's womb."

Very clearly and with no uncertain voice did Rome claim the full holiness of this actual presence of Christ's living body within herself. A section of the Church of England—that section in which God's providence had placed me, and which taught me, I thank it, this doctrine, claimed a portion, but a portion only, of this presence. A section of my Church claimed a portion of the presence, and even that section sprung into being only a short time since, so that it was by no means certain if even that partial presence had been claimed even by a section within my "Church" for long long years before.

The presence to which a section made this doubtful claim was the shorter non-continuous presence for the brief moments of communion within the individual. The abiding presence on the altar in every Church was rejected in words the power of which the section laboured to

explain away ; but such presence was rejected utterly, even by that section, in practice. That sacramental presence in which the section claimed to believe was not "by Christ's ordinance reserved," nor, even if reserved, was it "worshipped."

Rome exulted in Christ's presence : England boasted in His absence. Which of these two bore the mark of holiness? Was it the love of His presence or the love of His absence, the claim of His never-failing presence, or the assertion of His unbroken, or briefly-broken, absence—which of these two was holiness?

Aye! even that doubtful presence which a section claimed tremblingly was made more doubtful by a still further doubt. Where there was no priest, there was not the presence of the High priest. Christ came where His true priesthood was. If to all His disciples, still more specially to His priests did He say, "Behold! I am with you all days." Had the "Church of England" the true priesthood? Rome said, as it had said for three centuries, "No," and Rome, as even my section told me, was an old, old branch of the true Church, and would speak, if any spoke—certainly as surely as England's self—by the voice of the Holy Spirit. And as time after time I lay prostrate at Communion, the terrible doubt came to me, backed surely by strong reason, not a scruple nor an idle fear, "Is this my Lord—or is it a mockery—the empty gift of a false priesthood, which our Lord knows not?"

XVI.

“The body in which is holiness will know how to battle with sin.”

A HOUSEHOLD cannot be called a good household, nor the parents who rule it good parents, if they do not teach clearly what is right, and what wrong, if they lay down no rules to guide their children to the right, if they do not practise them in the right, nor punish them when they wilfully err, nor supply any means by which their children may be strengthened and encouraged in the battle against wrong. Good parents would not simply leave their children each to his untaught and unaided conscience. And as with households so with societies boasting themselves to be the societies of God. It is not to be conceived that God would come down from heaven, make Himself part of a race lost to Him by sin, die for that race that He may recover it from sin, and then leave it without clear knowledge of what sin is and how to get rid of it, and without helps, clear to be seen and reached, by which sin may be conquered.

Where, then, I said to myself, God is, there will be first of all a clear knowledge of what pleases Him, and what does not, in other words, of what is sin and what is not. For men cannot fight enemies about whom they do not know, whether they are foes or friends. I had a right then to ask of England and of Rome—“Which of you proves the presence of God’s holiness within you by clear teaching about sin? Our Lord taught clearly what was right, what wrong—‘You have heard that it was said of old time—but I say unto you.’ Our Lord’s society will speak as its Head spoke: which of you will guide me with ‘I

say unto you?' And Rome pointed me to guides everywhere, a guide in every priest, coming not in his own name, but in the name of Christ, and speaking not his own doctrine but the doctrine of Christ's society, and therefore all teaching the same, and all able to say "This do and you shall live; this do and you shall die."

Clearly besides did they teach as our Lord taught, making difference between sin and sin. All sin, they said, is hateful; the least sin offends the holiness of God, and so offending is not little, and yet there is difference between sin and sin; one is a "mote" and another a "beam," one deserves the "judgement" and a second the "council," but a third "hell-fire;" for some there are few stripes and for some many.

But England, through my childhood upwards, gave me no clear instruction as to what was sin, what not. If men contended what was truth what not, so also what was sin, what not. Nor only were the sheep at war with each other: shepherd strove with shepherd.

To play any sport upon a Sunday was, nay! to this day is, with some men, deadly sin: with others it is a good and harmless spending of the day. Nay! to play at all, to have any kind of recreation or amusement at any time on any day, was by many held sinful; and if others preached, as I have more than once heard them preach, in defence of balls and gaiety, yet they spoke, as indeed did their opponents, their own opinion in their own name, not with authority, in the name of a society of Christ. A child, therefore, growing up in such a body, if he thought at all, knew not what to think. The right of one teacher was the wrong of another; the sin of one guide became holiness with the next.

So was the poor child who had been surprised by fear into a sudden falsehood, who had deserved only the "judgement," if even that, left to suppose that he had deserved "hell-fire," sometimes indeed rebuked as if so it was.

Rome taught my conscience, showed my reason how to discern a sin: England left my conscience to itself, to picture sin where there was none, to fancy no sin where in the deed itself was grievous wickedness.

And if this was so with the mere knowledge of what sin is, so also was it with the knowledge of how to get rid of sin, and how to battle with it. Where there is holiness there also of necessity will there be, side by side with keenest hatred of sin, the most son-like trust in boundless mercy. For mercy also is an attribute of God, and God is not holiness alone but mercy also; and the fear which does not love is not true fear at all.

I said then to Rome and England, "God came down and died that I might put sin away—that I might get it pardoned when done, and that I might be strengthened not to do it. Which of you will teach me clearly how to get rid of sin?"

And Rome's answer came at once and clearly: "This do and you shall be saved. Repent, and repent truly, and examine your repentance and see if it be of this kind or of that, the repentance of love, or the repentance of fear, the repentance of a son's fear or of a slave's fear; and bring your sins truly told and your repentance, as loving as you can make it, to the ear of the priest; for God has given such power unto men, that when the tale of sin is truly told, and when the teller would have no more of sin, the priest, by God's merciful power, can put the sin away."

England had no such clear voice for me. She did indeed cry "repent," though some even questioned the need of that; but as she told me not what the sins were of which I must repent, so did she not tell me what sort of repentance I must have. And as for bringing sins to the priest—some few said it was right, by far the most part said it was wrong: my immediate superior heard my confessions, while the Anglican Bishop of both of us told me to confess was a superstition.

But could it be a mark of holiness in a society, a proof of its being the body of Christ, that it did not as a society know how to battle with sin, and could not as a society teach its children how to get rid of sin? Poor holiness indeed!

Rome spoke clearly; England stammered: which had the sign of God's presence?

And as with getting rid of sin when done, so with the aids against the doing it. "Strengthen me against sin," I cried out naturally enough to my spiritual mother, "the Church of my baptism," as the phrase was—as if there could be more than one baptism into one body—"Strengthen me against sin." But my mother answered not: and her children spoke for her with divided voices.

Rome gave me clear answer, and showed me ten thousand helps. (Every Mass strengthens you: every prayer strengthens you: Mary and the saints and the whole host of angels and every soul within the Church that is in the grace of God, all are bringing you strength; but here besides are seven basketsful of unfailing bread which your Lord has provided till the end of time—your baptism is the beginning of your strength, and your confirmation its manhood, and that confession of which we

spoke before is your medicine and gives new vigour to the weakness left by sin ; and here above all is your food, all the grace of the Sacred Heart of Christ, all the power of the precious blood, in communion after communion.)
“ All ye that thirst, come to the waters: and you that have no money, make haste, buy, and eat: come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

And besides these sacraments they pointed me to book after book full of counsel, and to wise skill in the battle against sin which had been learned at the feet of saints ; the knowledge of sin and the way to conquer it had become a science in Rome:—in England the little that they had was borrowed from the Church to which they boasted themselves equal at least, if not more than equal.

And I said—how could I help saying?—“ in the art of holiness Rome can teach to me what heaven has taught to her : England can teach nothing, for she does not know.”

XVII.

“ Where the household is holy, there will be discipline, and the children will be holy.”

A GOOD kingdom has its laws, a good household its rules, a good army its discipline and its drills, or there will be weakness in the State, and quarrel in the family, and untrained soldiers with no heart to fight. And so surely it is with a society founded among men for a clear and certain purpose by a Man of perfect wisdom. Holiness will train to holiness, will fashion the brothers of the society to habits of holiness, and lay upon them duties moulding them to one character, and that a character of holiness.

Rome was ready to teach me, and England had not taught me, what sin was and how to get rid of it, and where to find strength against it: and now I asked of each, "Have you rules for my conduct day by day, by which I may practise holiness? I have fallen nature to struggle with, a world to overcome, a devil to fight. Have you any society rules to help me in a life-long battle?" And Rome answered "Yes. In Christ's household there are rules helping you to be holy: not too many, lest they burden the weak; nor too hard, being made by infinite tenderness for all, not only for the strong but for those who labour and are heavy laden, and yet training the hands even of the feeble so that they shall not be slain in the war." "And such rules are?" I asked. "First, the rule of worship. Without prayer men cannot be holy, and unless there be clear rule, the sloth and the carelessness of men will draw them away from prayer altogether; and no prayer, no grace. Our society rule is, 'Sunday must be kept holy.'" "England has the same rule," I urged. "Yes: but she neither enforces the rule by any penalty, nor tells her children clearly how it is to be kept. The rule of Rome is clear. Sunday is made holy by the worship of God: all other Sunday rules are but helps to this one. That worship must be public. The brothers must meet together on the Sunday morning in the temple common to them all and there with the worship of the society must honour God." "And if they do not?" "He who can be present and is through fault away from the family gathering has sinned against the Divine Father of the family a deadly sin. Dying unrepentant he will belong to the family no more." "It must be the Sunday morning? Will not the evening do?" "The Sunday morning; not

because morning is in itself holier than evening, but because in the morning only, before mid-day, the society offers its great worship—which is the offering of Christ to His Father in the one continued sacrifice. The sacrifice of Christ, the one sacrifice offered by Himself on Calvary, offered by Himself to the end of time, that sacrifice gains for us all holiness, every blessing, and once a week on the Sunday, and on a few other days on which there is special reason for thanking God, every member of Christ's society must be present at this offering, or they are unworthy members, bringing not forth good fruit, and in danger of being cut off."

There was no such clear rule in England. To worship God in the fields was as good as to worship in Church; and what matter, morning or evening? The holiness of the Sunday was to do nothing, and idleness had become a virtue: or if some were stricter, it was their own conscience they followed and not a society rule, and there was no talk of deadly sin.

So again with another rule. Soldiers must learn to restrain themselves; they must know how to suffer, to bear cold and heat; holiness cannot be learned except by taking up the Cross. Besides, true soldiers will be like their captain, if he be a good captain: and Christians will be like Christ. It was not the head alone that suffered on the cross, but the limbs, the whole body; the society of Christ, if it did not suffer, would be a monstrous thing to see, the uncrucified limbs of a crucified head. So on its children the true society lays rules of temperance. Our Lord died hungering on the Friday—we must cut off something of our usual food. Our Lord ate nothing for the forty days; we must eat less than our wont and of a poorer

kind, that we who have sinned may suffer somewhat with Him Who suffered for sins not His own. And if, not of necessity but of greed, this rule is broken, you are an untrue member of a society which lives to fight against unholiness, and dying unrepentant must remain out of it for ever.

But in England men kept no Friday, no Lent. Their Master fasted and they feasted: their Master died and they made merry. Or if there were stricter ones, they followed their own wisdom, not a society rule.

Which had the mark of holiness? The society whose rule was worship of God, and restraint of self, or the society which had no discipline whereby its children either offered their crucified Master, or crucified themselves with Him?

But rules such as these are for all. Will there not be in the art of holiness, as in all other arts, some who will rise to greater things than others and be mighty masters of their Art? "Be ye perfect," our Lord had said, "as your Father Who is in heaven is perfect," and it was clear that in such perfection there were heights over heights, and that some could be holier in such imitation of our Father than others. Truly it could not be other than a holy wish, to wish to be like to our Father in heaven. Which society will guide me to this perfection?

And Rome answered at once, "From the first there have been those in the society of Christ whom the Master has drawn on to higher perfection. Not all followed him alike. The rich young man had kept the commandments: that was the goodness of many, the needful goodness indeed for Heaven; but he turned away when bidden to be perfect, to sell all and give to the poor and follow his poverty-loving

Lord: St. Peter and the Apostles the while had left all and followed Him; that was perfection. So still in the true society of Christ—in St. Peter's society—men and women crowd on to be "perfect as their Father in heaven."

"So you give rules for such perfect lives, as you give rules for the many?"

Surely: how else could we be the society of Christ?

"What then are the kinds of perfection, not binding on the many, but making us like our Lord?"

Perfection is manifold; it is of course in itself the full forming in a man of every virtue, in the highest degree given to him to reach, by the power of grace. But there are three counsels given by our Lord, three things to which He would persuade us, but which He will not command, through which men may strive after that highest charity which makes them perfect.

"And they are?" That of which we have already spoken—"Sell all that thou hast." Wrestle, as they wrestled of old, with no garment by which your enemy may hold you. Be poor as your Lord on Christmas night; choose of your own free will the treasures of heaven which moth cannot corrupt. So will you be perfect as He was perfect, and He was perfect as His Father.

And if this is to be, if no treasure is to draw your heart down to earth, then must you place yourself amongst those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," and embrace that virtue with the beauty of which the Gospel opens, the perfection of angels made more perfect on earth, the perfection of virginity. Throw away for love of God earthly possessions and be poor; throw away for the love of God all earthly love and keep your virginity unspotted.

And the third is that perfection of the cradle and the cross which God became Man because He loved it so, the perfection of humility which flowers into perfect obedience. He "learned" obedience, He tasted the sweet delight of a virtue which is proper to a created nature. Throw away earthly treasures and be poor; throw away earthly love and be a virgin; throw away your self—that will of yours which is your innermost self—and by obedience put in its place the Will of God. "Thy Will be done on earth, as the perfect do it in heaven."

"Do you mean that this life is lived among you?"

How else could we be the society of Christ? Did not the apostles live it? Do our priests marry, or trade for wealth, or speak their own doctrine, or love their own lives? And what mean those ruins of convents and monasteries all England over? They are the ruins of this three-fold perfection.

"Practised no more?" Practised again as of old time, now that convents rise on every side, and men and women fling their wealth away, and give their love to God alone, and do not their own will but the Will of God told them by His messengers.

"And you?" But England answered not. The very word perfection was scarcely heard, scarcely found in her writings. And though men gave with lavish hand to the rebuilding of ruined churches, and though some tried to dwell in Sisterhoods, and there was a faintest semblance of monastic life here and there, this was the answer—the faint and feeble answer—of a very few, scoffed at by the many; an answer made timidly after three centuries of silence even by those few, and no answer of the society as a society.

And I said:—"The society which guides all to good-

ness, which guides many to perfection, has on it the mark of holiness: the society which has no rules for the many and dare not speak of perfection—how can it be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect? England is not holy; holiness belongs to Rome.”

XVIII.

“Good Tree, good Fruit: good Fruit, good Tree.”

Is it Rome or is it England which, as a matter of fact, makes men good? A good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the fruits of God’s society are the men and the works of God.

The bad lives of many Catholics were pressed upon me as an argument by an Anglican clergyman whose prayerful and conscientious life made him worthy of all respect. “I have been brought up,” he said, “in——,” and he named a large town in the North of England, “where a third almost, I think, of the people are Catholic; if you were to see the quarter of the town in which the most of them live, you would know that their Catholicity has not made them good.”

It puzzled me at first: by degrees it came to me to see that grace given and truth taught do not compel good fruits. The grace may be rejected and the truth despised. Grace and truth make the receiver able to bring forth fruit if he please, but they do not enter into a man, as evil spirits might, and rule him against his will; Judas was an Apostle, but his sin was no fruit of our Lord’s teaching; nor Ananias and Saphira arguments against the Church of Apostolic days.

Truly if there were no other fruits, if all the Apostles had been as Judas, and all early Christians as Ananias, then might we have condemned the tree which bore no fruit but this.) But this is not so. Where grace and truth are, there will be two effects on human souls—grace accepted will make saints, equal grace rejected will make devils. The Apostles sit on thrones as judges—Judas is a prince in hell.

So was it with the northern town of which my friend spoke. The glaring outward sins of those who rejected grace had forced themselves upon his sight: the quiet hidden lives of those who accepted grace and filled the church at Mass and crowded the Communion rails, these he had not known. He had looked upon Judas and thought all the Apostles like him.

But on this subject I have spoken at more length than is possible here in a little leaflet to which I will refer the reader.* That there should be bad men—and even many of them—in any religious body did not seem to me of itself to condemn the body, unless indeed it was made clear that the bad lives were produced by bad doctrine. Of themselves they proved nothing, because our fallen nature is the nature of us all, and that fallen nature is an evil tree able in all of us to bring forth evil fruit, resisting grace and truth.

Nor did it seem that much would be proved in favour of any religious body by the presence in it of “good men,” men whose worth and kindness and careful fulfilment of duty are acknowledged by all. All error is mixed with truth, and the truth amidst the error will in the better

* *Bad Catholics: their sin no argument against the Catholic Faith.* Barnet: St. Andrew's Magazine Office. Price 1d.

natures bear its fruit. There were good heathen of old time, and there are "good men" in religions which are not Christian. Simply to know that there is a God is a truth that falling into good ground will not be barren. Our Lord said plainly that salvation was of the Jews—yet it is the Samaritan leper who alone gives thanks, and our Lord sets before us the example of a Samaritan who practised a charity not found in Israel.

If little came then of comparing badness in religious bodies, and little of comparing ordinary goodness—what was the test?

Divine trees bring forth divine fruit. If any Christian society, claiming to be the one society of Christ, could show lives lived to-day, or in times near to-day, which were not of ordinary virtue, but altogether beyond the power of man and divine, lives that would continue the Gospel story, lives such as were led by Elias and Eliseus, by John Baptist, by St. Peter and St. Paul, then might we point to such lives and say "Here is the finger of God."

I turned to England. "At the Reformation you boast to have brought back the lost truth of God. An act so great needs to be clearly approved by God; but has such Reformation been marked by a single divine life, clearly beyond man's power, unearthly life lived by grace, approved by miracles?" And for answer they pointed to good men who led gentle lives of quiet piety, and told me miracles had ceased. The best man to my thinking, Howard the Philanthropist, was not of the Church of England.

I turned to Rome. Three lives of Roman saints had been given me by a good Anglican clergyman. They were the lives of St. Camillus of Lellis, founder of an order

for the care of the sick and dying, of the great St. Francis, and of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi ; two of them lived since the time when England cut itself off from Rome. Fruit so divine, holiness far beyond nature, approved by miracles, could come from no other than a divine tree. Our Lord had promised that in His Church the believer should do as great things as He had done : aye ! and greater. Here were the great things, here the going on of the Gospel.

I had the chance of reading only three lives at great length, but the number of such divine lives which Rome had to show me was, I found, countless : lives led the world over, by women as well as men, by youth as by the old, by laymen as by priests, by the ignorant as by the cultured.

Had such lives ceased suddenly at the Reformation both in Rome and England, it might have been natural to say, "There was fault at the Reformation on both sides, and the greater grace of old times has been withdrawn," but so to think was not possible. Such divine lives—such Gospel lives—with Gospel holiness and Gospel wonders went on in Rome up to the Reformation : they went on in more abundance, in an over-flowing river, afterwards : such divine lives went on in our own country while still one with Rome, up to the Reformation ; when it was no longer one with Rome, they ceased ; the waters of the river were dried up.

The holiness of those whom Rome called saints was not denied even by England, While the world spoke nothing of any amongst English "good men," and their holiness, whatever it might be, was known only to their own land, the same world was ringing with praise of the saints of Rome. No one questioned that St. Charles was a saint

amongst the plague-stricken of Milan—none doubted the likeness which St. Vincent of Paul bore to the meek and humble of heart Who went about doing good. They were lights burning before men.

Thinking of those holy men of Rome, of whose goodness none doubted, I asked myself this question, "Did those men, as they grew holier, draw nearer to England, and think and speak more lovingly of her as of a sister Church?" And the answer was in every case, No; holy men they were, and holier they grew, and full and more full of good works to all men, but for English doctrine, and English parting from Rome, never one word of kindness from the gentlest of them all. Rather, as their holiness grew, they burned more hotly to draw men out of England into Rome. Yet true holiness—and all men said their holiness was true—makes men see clearly. The beams and even the motes are gone from their eyes; and the clear sight of their moteless eyes was against the "Church of England."

I saw their lives to be approved by miracle, and in England no miracle. When England told me that the time for miracle was past; that miracles were given to prove Christianity true, but that, truth once proved, their use was gone, it seemed to me such answer could not hold. If miracles were needed to prove the truth at its first teaching in the world by God, much more were they needed to prove that this God-taught truth had gone wrong, and that the Reformation had come to set it right. If miracles were to be added to the holy lives of the apostles, when they taught the truth, much more were they needed to prove so strange a thing as that the lost truth was sent back through such apostles as King Henry and Queen Elizabeth. If the truth taught by God, Who fled

from an earthly crown, was lost and given back to men by an earthly King ; if the truth taught by the poor but holy fishermen was lost and given back to men by the rich, the worldly and the impure ; then indeed was there need of miracle upon miracle to make clear a fact which men might well be excused for doubting.

Apart from this, the doctrine that miracles were only for this end seemed to me not true. That they were needed in greater numbers at the first founding of the faith, that might well be : that they were not needed at all and were altogether to cease when the faith was founded, that seemed untrue. I found them worked in the Jewish Church all along, not only by men of special holiness, but in such a regular and constant way as the healing of one sick man at the stirring of the pool, an annual thing upon a certain day like the liquefying of the blood of St. Januarius, or as others think, done more frequently, from time to time, as God willed.

Moreover, at the time of the Reformation new worlds were opened to men, and savage nations were found to whom Christianity was preached for the first, or nearly the first, time. With such nations the old reason for miracles held good. They were wanted to prove the truth of Christianity when first preached. These nations England conquered : did she work one miracle ? Not one. Rome sent them apostles : did they work miracles ? St. Francis Xavier at least raised many of the dead to life.

I looked to England then and it showed me no divine lives, no divine miracles, no divine sufferings, no divine love, nothing that was clearly more than human : I looked to Rome and it showed me wondrous saints, bearing wondrous crosses, and through those crosses changing men,

reforming manners, renewing society. I saw God marking them for His own by miracle; and I said, "Divine fruit cannot be borne by human tree; the fruit that Rome shows me is divine; Rome is the tree planted by divine hand."

XIX.

"The true Faith must be the old Faith:—What is new cannot be true."

TRUTH was once brought to earth in full perfection by God Himself. He did not indeed teach it long with His own lips: men would not let Him. But when He went to heaven truth was not to go back there with Him, or there would have been no use in His coming. Truth-teaching was a work of God, and God's works are eternal, and must go on. That it might not go back to heaven with Him, He sent down the "Spirit of Truth," the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, to keep it on earth in its perfection—"all truth" to the end of the world. So there would be use in His coming, and His going away would be, as He says, good for us.

But because the Holy Spirit was not Himself to become man and speak with the lips of a man, and because the Son, being Man, would honour His fellow-men, therefore till the end of time the lips of these fellow-men must be used, the Holy Spirit guiding, to teach that abiding truth. The truth must go on and be unchanged, for God is truth, and God is unchangeable. Changing truth is an absurdity. But this same unchanging old old truth, which had been true from all eternity, was not to be taught by all men. If all were teachers there would be none to learn. Some only, St. Paul tells us, are doctors and teachers.

Our Lord then, we find, chose some from among His disciples, "He caused twelve to be with Him, and sent these to preach." And again, He sent them forth, not yet to Gentiles, nor Samaritans, but to Jews only, "to preach the Gospel," and finally He promises them that they shall be witnesses for Him not only in Jerusalem and all Judea, but in Samaria also, the country of imperfect truth and error-mixed knowledge of God, and "even to the uttermost parts of the earth." And He bids them go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and "lo!" He adds, "I am with you all days, even unto the end of the world."

They were not to do this however at once, because they could not do it without their guide, so that they were to tarry at Jerusalem until they received "power from on high." This power they "shall receive after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

Some men, not all, were to do this : some were sent into the world to preach, not all ; and they were to do it "until the end of the world," our Lord being with them. But how could this be? They were not to live in this world any more than their Lord till the world's end ; they themselves would die and be with their Lord in heaven, not He with them on earth. It can mean nothing then, but that they were to hand on His sending, His power and His truth, to others. And so we find them doing. The eleven Apostles add to themselves a twelfth in St. Matthias. Barnabas and Silas and others were chosen to aid in the work. SS. Timothy and Titus are ordained by St. Paul and they are to ordain others.

So the Waters of Life sprang out of the Heart of Christ

to flow on through time for ever: the ever-flowing truth never to change; the teachers of the truth to go on in regular order, with the same right to "go and teach" which the Apostles had, the same power to teach which they had, so that the Apostles though dead, lived on in their children; and thus our Lord might be with them on earth even to the end of the world.

Now a river must flow on and on: it cannot stop for a mile or two and then begin its flowing again:—and God's river of truth must go on and on—it cannot stop for a century or two and then take up its flowing again. And if we go up stream, and still go on and up, we shall come to a river's source, and so must it be with God's river of truth. Its source the heart of Christ; or, to speak more truly, its source God from all eternity, and the beautiful basin in which it gathers itself in time the heart of Christ, and thence it flows and flows on unbroken, undefiled, till it reach eternity again.

So then, I had a right to ask of England and of Rome—"Show me that you are the river of God: prove to me that you sprang out of the heart of Christ: your truth the same as His: your right to go into the world and teach all nations the same which He gave to His Apostles; your power the same power from on high with which they were clothed on the first Whit-Sunday."

And Rome answered clearly, "I am that old Church which our Lord sent into the world. What He taught I teach, as I always have taught, by no power of my own, but by the Spirit of Him Who is my Head, guiding me so that I do not err. The power, the 'virtue which went out of Him,' and which entered into the Apostles, which made them Apostles, which enabled them to do the Apostolic

work they did ; that same power lives on, has always lived on, in me, unchanged, undiminished, so that in me the Apostles, though dead, still speak, and neither the world nor the cause of Christ have lost one whit by the going away of the Apostles to their reward. I am the continued life of the Apostles, their unceasing immortality on earth, as they were the continuance of the life of Christ."

So the doctrine, I asked, has never changed, the river never ceased to flow on ?

"Never for one instant: in one deep broad channel, seeming to deepen as men looked into it more closely and came to see its depths, seeming to broaden, like the rivers of earth, as error sprang up on every side, and the true line which marked the course of the stream was more and more clearly marked out. It was not that it ran deeper, it was not that it grew broader, but that men, as they gazed, came to plumb the depth and measure the breadth more truly. Of each of the Apostles was that word true—"He that believeth on Me," as the Scripture saith, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," and the water which flowed was the same, for the Apostles were one."

"And you?" I said to England ; but England answered not. She taught no such on-flowing of a divine stream welling from the heart of Christ. The very reason which she gave for her being a separate Church, standing alone, was that the stream had ceased to flow, or flowing had become so mixed with earthly rivers and rivers of Hell, that the water was no more divine. And others said, it flowed on for a few centuries clear and undefiled, while the Church was still one, and met in universal council, but living water it is not now, and the nations cannot drink of it as of old.

And I said "England does not so much as claim to be Apostolic. St. Paul tells us that the Church is built upon the foundations of the Apostles (Eph. ii. 20); and St. John writes of the twelve foundations of the heavenly City bearing up the one City, each with its distinct jewel-like beauty (Apoc. xxi. 19); but England claims no part with the Apostles. She boasts that she is built only upon those who wrote Scripture, St. Matthew, St. John, St. James, St. Peter, St. Jude, and upon those, not as Apostles, but as Scripture writers. With the Apostles who wrote not, what has she to do?"

But more: it came to me to think that the foundations of houses or of city walls must be with them always in every way: let them crumble and corrupt, lose aught of their strength, and the house will sink, the city walls be broken down. And I said, "As it was good for the Apostles that our Lord should go away, and the world lost nothing by His going, but gained,—or it could not have been good—so by the death of the Apostles not one whit was lost of any power, any happiness, that the world and the Church had by their presence. The Apostles died:—Apostolic certainty, apostolic truth, apostolic grace, apostolic right to rule, apostolic wisdom, lived on, or the foundations support no more, and it is in no real sense that we are said to be built upon them."

Which Church claims, and can prove her claim best, that the fulness of apostolic life in every way lives on in her? The Apostles were infallible, I said; they could not mistake in their teaching. "Though we or an Angel of heaven," writes the last of the Apostles, born out of due time, "preach any other Gospel besides that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema,"—cursed with

the curse of a lost angel. Strong infallibility ! living in individual men, not in a council, as when they gathered at Jerusalem, but in each Apostle by himself, so that to each one could his converts come and ask, and know the answer he gave to be the answer of God. And I said, "Did the Apostolic infallibility vanish when the Apostles died? If so, why should they have died, and how are we built on them as on foundations, if once those foundations were infallible, but now are fallible, if once they were rock, but now are sand. And Rome answered "Apostolic infallibility did not leave the earth for an instant—nor does it dwell in a Council only, the gathering of which might be hindered by the world's power, but in an individual, as of old, the holder of the Apostolic See."

And this the reason why you call it the Apostolic See? "For this among other reasons; but there are other reasons:—

One is, that it was founded by an Apostle, and he not one among the twelve alone, but the Prince of his brethren, the Judah among the twelve sons. It only so founded. St. James is indeed not only Apostle but Bishop also of a special See, of a city however which in God's providence was to pass away, which was clearly not to be the eternal capital of Christ's eternal kingdom; and his bishopric was for the sake not of the whole Catholic Church, but rather of the Jews only. So he hints to us himself in his Epistle, writing indeed for the sake of all nations and all times as the rest of Scripture is written, and yet addressing himself "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." Besides St. James, many of the Apostles founded indeed Sees, but none dwelt in his See himself as first bishop, and died in it as Bishop. So Rome is the one See in which an Apostle has

specially reigned as Bishop and handed on, and to-day still hands on, his bishopric to others.

Here then in this See if anywhere the river of truth, the Divine Tiber, has gone flowing on; and from him—the Bishop Apostle—the Bishops upon whom his mantle falls in Rome have always received and will receive the same old Apostolic infallibility, which gives rocky power to the foundations of the Church. The world has lost nothing by the death of the infallible Apostles. The rock-like stability of truth depends upon everlasting infallibility, and if the Apostolic gift of infallibility has gone, truth also has gone with it. To be Apostolic then is to possess all that the Apostles handed down, all that Christ said to them—“whatsoever I have said to you”—with Apostolic certainty, through the power of the same Spirit of Truth who guided the Apostles.

But more:—the whole earth was committed to the Apostles, and they were charged to preach the gospel to “every creature.” To each Apostle was given in all its breadth and length the fulness of this mission; no one was confined to this diocese or this tract of country; there were twelve world-wide rulers, each with a right to “judge the twelve tribes of Israel.” The whole flock was pastured by twelve shepherds united in perfect harmony, twelve men, one mind, one will. They did indeed by agreement part out the world among themselves: had they not, Apostolic unity would have still made confusion or quarrel impossible. But when they had gone from earth, where was left this Apostolic power over the whole earth? It is clear that the Bishops were confined each to his own spot; the Bishop of Ephesus was not Bishop Smyrna, nor the Bishop of Jerusalem Bishop also of Canterbury. Was this Apostolic

power then taken away—one great bond of peace gone? The Apostles founded Sees, but who shall found Sees now? Shall it belong to this Bishop or to that to missionise nations yet unconverted? And if two Bishops or more shall claim power over the one district, what Apostle with world-wide right of rule shall judge between them? When for instance unknown millions are found in America or Australia, to whom is the duty entrusted by God of preaching the Gospel to them? Shall it be left to chance, or quarrel between See and See with no hope of decision unless by force, or until, after much fighting, a General Council shall be able to meet?

And the answer made by England was—"It is a matter of conquest, each nation must look to its own. We have no special duties to the nations, but when there are Colonists in sufficient numbers we ordain Bishops for them, not by Apostolic power over the whole world of course, but by our power over any lands we possess."

So when the Apostles went to heaven, no provision was left for preaching the Gospel, at least in any orderly way, to every creature, and the Apostolic power over the whole earth is gone :—and you?

"The Apostolic power," answered Rome, "and the Apostolic duty still remain, in the Apostolic See, to which belongs every Apostolic gift. All power of every kind is given to our Lord on earth; I, as His Vicar, am called by Him into the using of that power. Therefore whatever new nations have been made known or shall be, or whatever change may be brought about by war or other trouble of the changing world, provision was made by our dear Lord, and now exists, by which at once the needs of souls may be supplied and men sent with Divine authority to

teach, to found and to rule. The Apostolic See is the eternal Home of all things Apostolic. St. Peter is dead, but St. Peter lives."

And I saw in England no sign of Apostolicity, not so much as a claim to be built upon the Apostles. In Rome every mark of Apostolicity—the one See founded by an Apostle is still living on as of old, handing the grace of order, the power to sacrifice, the right to bind and loose, with a claim which not even England disputes, from Bishop to Bishop, from Bishop to priest, in its doctrines flowing on with no break nor change, with Apostolic claim to infallible guidance, and the Apostolic power to rule the whole world. And I said unity and catholicity and holiness and apostolicity, the four marks on which Christians agree as the signs of God's Church, all beyond nature, all divine, all in fullest perfection, all are here: here is my teacher sent from God—here is the presence of Christ.

XX.

At the Gate of the City.

I WAS at the feet of a Catholic priest. I had known no Catholics; but the writings of one Anglican clergyman before his conversion had made me love and trust in him, and I wrote to ask if I might call and put the thoughts of my mind before him.

Up to the very gates of the city I had been pursued by the fear that the act was against humility. "Better men than thou art," said the voice, "have lived and died in the Church of England; who art thou to condemn thy mother?"

And in my agony, I answered "It is not I, O Lord, who condemn; it is the Church upon whom Thou hast put all

Thy marks ; it is she with her countless legions of saints, it is she who condemns, not I. It is she who orders me, as I value my soul's salvation, to join myself to her. Upon her, marked with all Thy marks, I cast the whole responsibility."

And now I knelt at the feet of the priest as he bade me kneel. He put into my hands the long Creed of Pope Pius which strikes at all modern errors and asked if I believed it all. And the answer was in effect :—

"The Roman Church is the Church of God, for so God Himself has marked her ; as the Church of God she cannot err—with her are the words of eternal life ; let her teach me, and all she teaches I believe."

Was there trouble? Plenty. Had it been ten thousand times more, and had it been sorrow to be borne more than once, I should count it all but little, compared not only to the weight of eternal glory hereafter, but compared even to the present joy of living in the City of God.

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